PLAYS

OF

THREE ACTS,

PLAYS.

PRIVATE THEATRE

[Price 12 s. in Boards.]

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79k 20

PLAYS

OF

THREE ACTS;

WRITTEN FOR A

PRIVATE THEATRE.

BY

WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esq.

LONDON:
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LONDON:

PLAYS.

DEDICATION

TO

HER GRACE THE DUTCHESS OF DEVONSHIRE.

Non perch' io creda biſognar miei carmi
A chi ſe ne fa copia da ſe ſteſſa;
Ma ſol per ſatisfare a queſto mio
Che ho d' onorarla e di lodar diſio.

ARIOSTO, Canto XXXVII.

THE Great and Fair, in every age and clime,
Receive free homage from the Sons of Rhyme:
Bend, ye ambitious Bards, at Grandeur's ſhrine!
Be Power your patron! Wit and Beauty mine!—
To thee, whom elegance has taught to pleaſe
By ſerious dignity, or ſportive eaſe;
Whom Virtue hails, at Pleaſure's feſtive rites,
Chaſte Arbiter of Art's refin'd delights:

To thee, fair DEVON! I breathe this votive ſtrain;
Nor dread th' averted ear of proud Diſdain:
For O, if muſic has not bleſt my lyre,
A lovelier ſpirit of th' ætherial choir,
Joy-breathing Gratitude, that hallow'd gueſt,
Who fires with heavenly zeal the human breaſt,
Bids my weak voice her ſwelling note prolong,
And conſecrate to thee her tributary ſong.

When firſt my anxious Muſe's fav'rite child,
Her young SERENA, artleſs, ſimple, wild,
Preſum'd from privacy's ſafe ſcenes to fly,
And met in giddy haſte the public eye;
Thy generous praiſe her trembling youth ſuſtain'd,
The ſmile ſhe dar'd not aſk, from thee ſhe gain'd;
And found a guardian in the gracious DEVON,
Kind as the regent of her fancied heaven.—
The flatter'd Muſe, whoſe offspring thou haſt bleſt,
In the fond pride that rules a parent's breaſt,

Preſents thus boldly to thy kind embrace
This little group of her ſucceeding race.
Bleſt! if by pathos true to Nature's law,
From thy ſoft boſom they may haply draw
Thoſe tender ſighs, that eloquently ſhew
The virtues of the heart from whence they flow!
Bleſt! if by foibles humorouſly hit
In the light ſcenes that aim at comic wit,
They turn thy penſive charms to mirthful grace,
And wake the ſprightly ſweetneſs of thy face!

While thus the proud Enthuſiaſt would aſpire
To change thy beauties with her changing lyre;
Much as ſhe wants the talent and the right,
To ſhew thy various charms in varied light,
O might the Muſe, intruding on thy bower,
From her fair Patron catch the magic power
Frequent to meet the public eye, and ſtill
That fickle eye with fond amazement fill!

Let her, if this vain wiſh is loſt in air,
Breathe from her grateful heart a happier prayer!
Howe'er her different fables may give birth
To fancied woe, and viſionary mirth;
May all thy griefs belong to Fiction's reign,
And wound thee only with a pleaſing pain!
May thy light ſpirit, on the ſea of life,
Elude the rocks of care, the guſts of ſtrife,
And ſafely, as the never-ſinking buoy,
Float on th' unebbing flood of real joy!

EARTHAM,
January 29, 1784.

W. HAYLEY.

PREFACE.

PREFACE.

AS the following Plays were intended only for a private theatre, I have been tempted by that circumſtance to introduce a kind of novelty into our language, by writing three comedies in rhyme, though the Comic Muſe of our country has been long accuſtomed to expreſs herſelf in proſe, and her cuſtom has the ſanction of ſettled precept, and ſucceſsful example. The Antiquarian, indeed, may remind me that Gammer Gurton's Needle, one of the earlieſt of our old plays, with other comic productions of that rude period, was written in rhyme; and poſſibly ſome faſtidious enemies of that Gothic jingle, as they affect to call it, may conſider the preſent Publication as nothing more than a relapſe into the moſt barbarous mode of dramatic compoſition.

For the boldneſs of an attempt, which has no modern precedent to plead in its behalf, ſome apology may be due to the Public.

In the firſt place, I beg it may not be ſuppoſed, that by writing a comedy in rhyme, I mean to convey an indirect cenſure on the contrary practice. No one can prize more highly than I do the many excellent comedies in proſe, with which our language is enriched. I am very far from entertaining a wiſh to overturn the ceremonial which the Comic Muſe of England has eſtabliſhed; but I hope to find our country as much a friend to toleration in the forms of literature, as in thoſe of religion. The cuſtom of other enlightened nations, both ancient and modern, may be pleaded on this occaſion in behalf of verſe. Ariſtophanes, in his play of the Clouds, ſeems to pride himſelf on his poetry. Arioſto having written two comedies in proſe, converted them both into metre at a maturer period of his life; and Moliere, the unrivalled maſter of the French comic theatre, who has written admirably both in proſe and rhyme, is, I think, moſt admirable, and moſt truly comic, when he adheres to the latter.

To the author who attempts a comedy in Engliſh rhyme, our language ſeems to offer an advantage, which the

the French poet did not enjoy. The Comic Muſe of France has chiefly confined herſelf to that ſtructure of verſe, which belongs equally to her Tragic Siſter. In the poetry of our nation, this particular meaſure is appropriated to ſportive ſubjects, and though hitherto not uſed in Comedy, it poſſeſſes to an Engliſh ear a very comic vivacity. That it is highly calculated for poems of wit and humour, we have a ſtriking proof in that moſt exquiſite production the Bath Guide. How far it may ſucceed through the varied ſcenes of an Engliſh play, experiment only can determine. As ſome readers, on the firſt ſight of a comedy in rhyme, may haſtily ſuppoſe that the faſhion and the materials of the work are borrowed from the Theatre of France, I think it proper to declare, in juſtice to the writers of that country, that they are by no means anſwerable for any defects which may be found in theſe dramatic performances. I am not conſcious of having borrowed a ſingle character or ſituation from any comic writer whatever, either foreign or domeſtic.——The firſt of the three comedies, contained in the preſent Publication, was founded on a real anecdote related to me by an intimate friend, who, concealing the names of the parties, mentioned their ludicrous adventure as a new and

tempting ſubject for the Comic Muſe.——The plan of the ſecond aroſe in the mind of its author, from his remarking the various effects of Connoiſſeurſhip in different characters. An attachment to the fine arts, which is allowed to refine and ſtrengthen the virtues of a manly and a generous ſpirit, has perhaps a peculiar tendency not only to ſhew, but to increaſe the narrowneſs of a vain and feeble mind; and if ſuch a tendency exiſts, it is the province of a comic writer to counteract and correct it.——The aim of the third comedy in this collection is to laugh at two diſtinct ſpecies of affectation, very prevalent in our age and country; the affectation of refined ſentiment, and the affectation of pompous and pedantic expreſſion. I proteſt however againſt perſonal application: and, to guard againſt it, let me declare, that this ridicule is levelled, not at the great and reſpectable Veteran in the field of literature, whoſe phraſes may ſometimes be borrowed by a character in the play; but at the nameleſs and ſervile herd of his awkward imitators.—Vigor and originality of thought give a ſanction to the pomp and peculiarity of his language. If ſingularities of ſtyle are united with genius and moral excellence, they are properly regarded with a partial reſpect; but when theſe ſingularities are pre-

poſterouſly copied, and ſeem to prevail as a faſhion, they become, I apprehend, very fair ſubjects of ſportive ſatire.

When I reflect what long and eſtabliſhed prejudice a rhyming play muſt encounter—when I remember that even Dryden himſelf, the moſt able advocate, and the greateſt maſter of rhyme in our language, has expreſsly condemned the uſe of it in comedy—I am alarmed at the hardineſs of my attempt; but when I recollect that time, the moſt infallible teſt of literary opinion, has fully ſhewn the miſtake of that immortal Poet, in recommending the uſe of rhyme in Engliſh Tragedy, I am inclined to hope that he might be equally miſtaken in ſuppoſing it utterly unſuited to our Comic Muſe. It may be urged indeed, with great truth, that a comedy in rhyme cannot be ſo cloſe a copy of Nature as a comedy in proſe, the latter adhering to the very language of common life. But from a ſiſter-art we may borrow, at leaſt a plauſible argument in favour of Poetry, on the preſent occaſion. The great maſter, who has deſcanted ſo happily on the principles of Painting, obſerves with great propriety, in one of his diſcourſes, that "we are "not always pleaſed with the moſt abſolute poſſible re-"ſemblance of an imitation to its original object: caſes

"may

" may exiſt, in which ſuch a reſemblance may be even
" diſagreeable. I ſhall only obſerve, that the effect of
" figures in wax-work, though certainly a more exact
" repreſentation than can be given by painting or ſculp-
" ture, is a ſufficient proof that the pleaſure we receive
" from imitation is not increaſed merely in proportion
" as it approaches to minute and detailed reality: we
" are pleaſed, on the contrary, by ſeeing ends anſwered
" by ſeeming inadequate means*." —On theſe prin-
ciples, which perhaps are equally juſt in the two kindred arts, a comedy in Rhyme may be ſtill more entertaining than a comedy, of equal merit in other points, which confines itſelf to proſe; and a critic who exclaims againſt the unnatural effect of a rhyming dialogue, may as juſtly cenſure a portrait on canvaſs, becauſe it is not ſo exact a copy of life, as an image of coloured wax. In both caſes the artiſt, whether painter or poet, may be juſtly called a true and a pleaſing copier of Nature, if he preſerves as high a degree of reſemblance, as his mode of imitation will admit, and embelliſhes his work with the attractive and almoſt indiſpenſable graces of eaſe, ſpirit, and freedom.

* Sir Joſhua Reynolds' Diſcourſe of December 1782.

It is ſaid by Voltaire of theatrical compoſition in general, "Tous les genres ſont bons hors le genre ennu-"yeux." If the preſent comedies fall not within the claſs which that lively Writer has ſo juſtly proſcribed, the Author may be allowed to hope, that his liberal and enlightened readers will look with indulgence on a publication, which aroſe from his wiſh to introduce a ſtriking, and he truſts not a blamable, variety into the amuſements of Engliſh literature.

CONTENTS.

CONTENTS.

	Page
THE HAPPY PRESCRIPTION, *a Comedy*, - -	1
MARCELLA, *a Tragedy*, - - - - -	93
THE TWO CONNOISSEURS, *a Comedy*, - -	175
LORD RUSSEL, *a Tragedy*, - - - -	265
THE MAUSOLEUM, *a Comedy*, - - -	351

ERRATA.

Page 35 line 7, for *appal* read *appall*.
— line 8, for *befal* read *befall*.
41 line 2, for *matches* read *matters*.
45 line 12, for *the* read *their*.
57 line 2, for *much* read *ſuch*.
64 line 14, for *approve* read *approves*.
72 line 17, for *am* read *I'm*.
159 line 6, for *bleſs* read *bleſt*.
181 line 10, for *don't play* read *ne'er plays*.
220 line 14, for *Trophonius'* read *Trophonius's*.
283 line 1, for *theſe* read *there*.
324, make a full ſtop after the word *thoughts* in the firſt line, and only a comma after the word *comfort* in the ſecond.
396 line 4, for *this* read *his*.

THE

THE

HAPPY PRESCRIPTION;

OR, THE

LADY RELIEVED FROM HER LOVERS:

A COMEDY, IN RHYME.

Perſons of the Drama.

SIR NICHOLAS ODDFISH,
SAPPHIC,
DECISIVE,
MORLEY,
COLONEL FELIX,
JONATHAN, Servant to MORLEY;

SELINA, Niece to SIR NICHOLAS,
MRS. FELIX, her Couſin, and Wife to the Colonel,
JENNY, Servant to SELINA.

Servants *of* SIR NICHOLAS, *&c.*

SCENE *the Country Manſion of the* ODDFISH *Family.*

THE

HAPPY PRESCRIPTION.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Enter Sir Nicholas *in debate with* Mrs. Felix *and* Selina.

MRS. FELIX.

WHAT a ſtrange declaration!—it gives me the ſpleen;
But 'tis what good Sir Nicholas never can mean.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Not mean it, fair Lady!—by Jupiter, yes!
And my project you'll ſee will be crown'd with ſucceſs;
I am joyous myſelf, and 'tis ever my plan
To give thoſe I love all the joy that I can.

MRS. FELIX.

We own it—but joy is like diet, dear Couſin,
One palate may'nt reliſh what pleaſes a dozen;
Nor will I allow that my appetite 's vicious,
If perchance I don't like, what you think moſt delicious.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Rare dainty diſtinctions!—but can I believe
That a woman e'er lived ſince the wedding of Eve,
Whoſe heart (tho' moſt coyly her head might be carried)
Did not fervently wiſh to be ſpeedily married?
Not to wound your nice ears with the name of deſires
Which youth renders lovely, and nature inſpires,
Your ſex, from its weakneſs, demands a defender,
Whom pride and affection make watchful and tender;
And if my fair Coz is no hypocrite grown,
The truth of my maxims you'll honeſtly own;
While the wars from your arms the brave Colonel detain,
Is the want of a huſband the ſource of no pain?

MRS. FELIX.

There, indeed, you have touch'd me a little too near,
My Soldier, you know, to my ſoul is moſt dear,
I own—and my frankneſs you never will blame,
I'd purchaſe his preſence with ought but his fame.

SIR

SIR NICHOLAS.

Well ſaid, thou dear, honeſt, and warm-hearted wife;
For thy truth may good angels ſtill watch o'er his life,
And while others the rough field of ſlaughter are treading,
Send him home full of glory, to dance at our wedding!
For a wedding we'll have to enliven us all,
And Hymen's bright altar ſhall warm the old hall.
For my Niece ere I die 'tis my wiſh to provide,
And ere two months are paſt I *will* ſee her a bride.
I'm reſolv'd—and you know that my neighbours all ſay,
Sir Nicholas Oddfiſh will have his own way.

MRS. FELIX.

Selina, dear Sir, wants no other protection,
While her life glides in peace by your gentle direction.
She thinks, and, I own, I approve her remark,
In conjugal cares 'tis too ſoon to embark:
Her boſom untouch'd by Love's dangerous dart,
Fate has not yet ſhewn her the man of her heart.

SIR NICHOLAS.

The man of her heart!—theſe nonſenſical fancies
You light-headed females pick out of romances.
That I am no tyrant you know very well,
So Couſin don't teach my good Niece to rebel!

I am

I am no greedy guardian, who thinks it his duty
On the altar of Plutus to ſacrifice beauty;
Whoſe venal barbarity, juſtly abhorr'd,
Ties a lovely young girl to an old crippled lord,
And baſely, to gain either rank or eſtate,
Makes her ſwear ſhe will love, what ſhe cannot but hate.
From ſuch a protector Heaven guard my dear Niece!
I wiſh her to wed that her joys may increaſe;
And the deuce muſt be in the ſtrange girl who diſcovers
No man to her mind in ſuch plenty of lovers.
To no very great length will my cruelty run,
If from twenty admirers I bid her chuſe one.

MRS. FELIX.

But why, dear Sir Nicholas, why in ſuch haſte?

SIR NICHOLAS.

'Tis thus that my projects are ever diſgrac'd
With the falſe names of hurry and precipitation,
Becauſe I abhor ſilly procraſtination;
That thief of delight, who deludes all our ſenſes,
Who cheats us for ever with idle pretences,
By whom, like the dog in the fable, betray'd,
We let go the ſubſtance to ſnap at the ſhade.

To ſeize preſent Time is the true Art of Life;
'Tis Time who now cries, make Selina a Wife!
The ſeaſon is come, I've ſo long wiſh'd to ſee
From the moment I dandled her firſt on my knee:
She, you know, to my care was bequeath'd by my Brother,
And having this Child, I ne'er wiſh'd for another:
Thro' life I have kept myſelf ſingle for her;
Her intereſt, her joy, to my own I prefer.

SELINA.

Your kindneſs, dear Sir, I can never repay.

SIR NICHOLAS.

In truth, my dear damſel, you eaſily may;
I demand no return ſo enormouſly great;
I aſk but a Boy to poſſeſs my eſtate.

SELINA.

Lord, Uncle, how come ſuch odd thoughts in your head?

MRS. FELIX.

From his heart, I aſſure you—'tis pleaſantly ſaid;
A fair ſtipulation—both parties agreed,
The compact, I truſt, in due time will ſucceed;
But patience, dear Knight, you will have your deſire,
Nor wait very long for a young little 'Squire.

SIR NICHOLAS.

The cold ſtream of Patience ne'er creeps in my veins,
But the wiſh my heart forms my quick ſpirit attains.
I'm none of your chill atmoſpherical wretches,
Whoſe affections are ſubject to ſtarts and to catches;
Whoſe wiſh, like a weather-cock, veering about,
Now turns towards hope, and now changes to doubt:
No, mine, like the needle without variation,
Only looks to one point, and that point 's Conſummation.
I want to behold this young Urchin ariſe,
Before I have loſt or my legs or my eyes,
That I may enjoy all his little vagaries,
As the changeable ſeaſon of infancy varies.
I long to be moulding his heart and his ſpirit,
To ſhew him the fields he is born to inherit;
Lead him round our rich woods, while my limbs are yet
limber,
And tell the young rogue, how I've nurs'd up his timber;
That when the worn thread of my life is untwiſted,
He long may remember that I have exiſted:
And when my old frame in our monument reſts,
As he walks by my grave with a few worthy gueſts,

He thus to ſome warm-hearted friend may addreſs him,
Here lies my odd, honeſt, old Uncle—God bleſs him!

MRS. FELIX.

Thank Heaven, dear Couſin, your hale conſtitution
Shews not the leaſt ſign of a near diſſolution.

SELINA.

To make your life happy, whate'er the condition,
Has been, my dear Uncle, my higheſt ambition;
To fulfil every wiſh that your fancy can frame,
Still is, as it ought to be, ever my aim:
But if by your voice I am doom'd to the altar,
With terror and pain my weak accents muſt falter,
Unleſs my kind ſtars a new lover ſhould ſend me,
Unlike all the ſwains who now deign to attend me.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Nice wench! do you want the whole world to adore you?
Would you have all the men of the earth rang'd before you?
For thanks to your charms, and to fortune's kind bounty,
You may rank in your train all the youth of our county,
And chuſe whom you will; if the man has but worth,
And is nearly your equal in wealth and in birth,

I give my conſent—you are free from reſtriction;
But I will not be plagu'd with perverſe contradiction.
I will ſee you wed without any delay:
Your two fitteſt lovers are coming to-day;
Young Sapphic, whoſe verſes delight all the fair,
And Dicky Deciſive, Sir Jacob's next heir;
Both young and both wealthy, both comely and clever,
To gain you, no doubt, each will warmly endeavour;
For they come for a month, by my own invitation,
On purpoſe to ſound my dear girl's inclination:
I have ſaid to them both, and no man can ſpeak fairer,
Let him, who can pleaſe her moſt, win her and wear her.

SELINA, *aſide to* Mrs. Felix.

Good angels defend me!

MRS. FELIX.

I ſee nothing frightful:
Our month with ſuch gueſts muſt be very delightful:
When Sapphic's ſoft verſes incline us to doſe,
Dick will keep us awake with ſatirical proſe.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Don't croſs me, I ſay! nor miſlead my good Niece!
By Jove, if ſhe thwarts me with any caprice,

Like

Like a certain old juſtice I'll ring up my maids,
And marry the firſt of the frank-hearted jades;
For perverſe contradiction I never will bear,
But provide for myſelf a more dutiful heir.

MRS. FELIX.

Dear Couſin, in ſpite of his worſhip's deciſion,
You cannot be certain of ſuch a proviſion:
Attempts of that nature are ſubject to fail.

SIR NICHOLAS.

My deſigns you ſhall ſee, Madam, always prevail:
For if this nice Gipſy, by your machination,
Declines every offer, to give me vexation,
Like my late jolly neighbour, Sir Timothy Trickum,
Who vindictively married the frail Molly Quickum,
I'll make ſure of the matter, and chuſe me a wife,
With an heir ready plac'd on the threſhold of life:
For, as I have ſaid, tho' a foe to reſtriction,
I never will ſuffer perverſe contradiction.
You now know my mind, which no maſk ever covers,
So farewell, and prepare to receive your two lovers.

[*Exit.*

MRS. FELIX.

Go thy way, thou ſtrange mixture of ſenſe and of blind-
neſs!
A model at once of oppreſſion and kindneſs.
Thy will, thou odd compound of goodneſs and whim,
Is a ſtream, againſt which it is treaſon to ſwim;
Yet we muſt croſs the current—

SELINA.

Dear Couſin ſay how!
Direct oppoſition he will not allow:
What can you deviſe as a plan of prevention?
How divert his keen ſpirit from this new intention?
I had much rather die than be ever united
To one of the lovers, that he has invited:
My heart has a thorough averſion to both:
Yet to make him unhappy I'm equally loth;
When I think what I owe to his tender protection,
The worſt of all ills is to loſe his affection.

MRS. FELIX.

Dear Girl, your warm gratitude gives you new charms:
'Tis an amiable fear, which your boſom alarms,
And I from your Uncle's quick humour would ſcreen you,
Not looſen the bands of affection between you.

He

He merits your love, and you know he has mine;
Yet we ſomehow muſt baffle his haſty deſign,
Nor ſuffer his whim thus to make you a Wife,
To repent the raſh buſineſs the reſt of his life.
Take courage! kind Chance may aſſiſt us—

SELINA.

I doubt it,
Yet Heaven knows how we ſhall manage without it;
For when his heart's ſet on a favourite ſcheme,
His ardor and haſte, as you know, are extreme,
Like a med'cine ill-tim'd oppoſition is vain,
And inflames the diſorder 'twas meant to reſtrain.

MRS. FELIX.

In his fevers indeed there is no intermiſſion:
And thanks, gentle Coz! to your ſoft diſpoſition!
So ſweet and compliant your temper has been,
You have taught him to think contradiction a ſin;
And here all around him confirm that belief,
His vaſſals all bow to the nod of their chief.
Here ſhut from the world in this rural dominion,
No mortal oppoſes his will or opinion;
And thus he is ſpoil'd—Politicians all ſay,
Human nature 's not faſhion'd for abſolute ſway.

SELINA.

SELINA.

'Tis true, tho' the world, as you ſay, think him odd,
In this ſphere he is held a diminutive god:
And when I behold how his fortune is ſpent,
In ſuppreſſing vexation, and ſpreading content;
When I hear all the poor his kind bounty expreſſing,
And thoroughly know how he merits their bleſſing,
My feelings with theirs in his eulogy join,
And confeſs, that his nature is truly divine.

MRS. FELIX.

Thou excellent Girl! if ſuch fondneſs and zeal
For a warm-hearted, whimſical Uncle you feel,
With what fine ſenſations your boſom will glow,
What tender attachment your temper will ſhew,
When your fortunate lord Love and Hymen inveſt
With higher dominion o'er that gentle breaſt!
But tell me, dear Couſin—be honeſt—declare,
Has no young ſecret ſwain form'd an intereſt there?
I ſuſpect—but don't let my ſuſpicion affright you,
Tho' the good Knight's rare virtues amuſe and delight you,
From this gloomy old hall you would wiſh to get free,
Had not Cupid preſerv'd you from feeling *ennui*;

Come

Come tell me the name of the favourite youth:
I am ſure I gueſs right.

SELINA.

No, in ſad ſober truth
I never have ſeen in the courſe of my life,
A mortal to whom I ſhould chuſe to be wife.

MRS. FELIX.

Ye ſtars, what a pity!—I wiſh I could learn
That my Colonel from India would ſhortly return,
Both for your ſake and mine; for our preſent diſtreſs
He would ſpeedily turn into joyous ſucceſs;
As his regiment muſt ſome young hero afford,
Who might throw at your feet both himſelf and his ſword.
What ſay you, my dear, to a ſoldier?—

Enter Jenny.

JENNY.

Oh! Madam,
Here 's young Mr. Sapphic—I vow, if I had them,
I'd give fifty pounds had you ſeen how politely
He beg'd me to tie a ſweet noſegay up tightly,
Which is jolted to pieces—well, he 's a ſweet beau;
And now with his pencil he 's writing below,

I believe 'tis a poſy, he writes it ſo neatly,
And I'm ſure 'tis fine verſe, Ma'am, it ſounded ſo ſweetly.

MRS. FELIX.

Oh charming! his vows will be very ſublime,
And I truſt we ſhall hear his propoſals in rhyme.

SELINA.

How can you, dear Couſin, ſo cruelly jeſt in
A buſineſs you know I am really diſtreſt in?
I ſhall certainly forfeit my Uncle's protection,
For I never can wed where I feel no affection.
Do help me.

MRS. FELIX.

Good Girl, this perplexity ſmother,
And think your two lovers will baniſh each other:
There's much to be hop'd from our preſent affairs.

JENNY.

O, Ma'am, Mr. Sapphic is coming up ſtairs.

(Aſide as ſhe goes out.)

I am mightily pleas'd with this marrying plan,
And I hope in my ſpirit that he 'll be the man. [*Exit.*

Enter

Enter Sapphic.

SAPPHIC.

Fair Ladies, the moments have ſeem'd to be hours,
While I ſtopt in your hall to adjuſt a few flowers:
For the ſeaſon, I'm told, they 're uncommonly fine;
But I ſtill wiſh the tribute more worthy the ſhrine.

[*Bowing and preſenting them to* Selina.

SELINA.

Mr. Sapphic is always extremely polite:
Theſe roſes, indeed, are a wonderful ſight:
You are far better floriſts than we are.

MRS. FELIX.

My dear,
Mr. Sapphic has magic to make them appear,
And Flora is brib'd by the ſongs he compoſes
To produce for her poet extempore roſes;
Into this early bloom all her plants are bewitch'd:
But you do not obſerve how the gift is inrich'd,
Here 's a border of verſe, if my eyes don't deceive me.

SELINA, *aſide to* Mrs. Felix.

Dear Couſin you 'll read it—I pray you relieve me;
I ſhall bluſh like a fool at each civil expreſſion.

MRS. FELIX, *aſide to* Selina, *taking the paper.*

Now with emphaſis juſt and with proper diſcretion.

(Mrs. Felix *reads.)*

" Ye happy flowers give and receive perfume
" As on Selina's fragrant breaſt ye bloom:
" From earth, tho' not arrang'd in order nice,
" Ye are tranſplanted into Paradiſe;
" If on that ſpot ye languiſh into death,
" 'Twill be from envy of her ſweeter breath."

'Tis a delicate compliment, tender and pretty,
What original ſpirit! how graceful and witty!

SAPPHIC.

Dear Ma'am, you 're too good to find any thing in it,
'Tis a mere haſty trifle—the work of a minute:
On the anvil I had not a moment to hammer,
And I fear, in my haſte I have ſinn'd againſt grammar.

MRS. FELIX.

All ſlight imperfections I never regard
When I meet with ſuch vigor of thought in a bard,
With a fancy ſo brilliant—

SAPPHIC.

O! Ma'am, you 're too kind;
But candor 's the teſt of an amiable mind.

I wiſh

I wiſh that your taſte all our Critics might guide,
To ſoften that rigor with which they decide.

MRS. FELIX.

From Critics, dear Sir, you have little to fear.
If Mr. Deciſive himſelf had been here,
He muſt have been charm'd with this ſweet *jeu d'eſprit*,
Which, as he is coming to-day, he ſhall ſee.
I am eager to hear how his wit will applaud it:
To conceal it would be of due praiſe to defraud it.

SAPPHIC.

In Mercy's name, Ladies, I beg your protection,
Preſerve my poor rhymes from Deciſive's inſpection;
Conſider how haſty—

MRS. FELIX.

Say rather how ſprightly—

SAPPHIC.

Compos'd in a moment—

MRS. FELIX.

Produc'd ſo politely!

SAPPHIC.

He'll cut them to atoms!

MRS. FELIX.

Dear Sir, he's your friend,
And I thought he had ſeen all the poems you pen'd:
I was told that to him your long works you rehearſe—
Does Mr. Deciſive himſelf write in verſe?

SAPPHIC.

I wiſh from my ſoul that he did now and then;
But he uſes the pen-knife much more than the pen,
And too freely has ſlaſh'd all who write in the nation,
To give them an opening for retaliation.
My old friend Deciſive has honour and wit;
To the latter, indeed, he makes moſt things ſubmit;
And thinks it fair ſport, as a friend or a foe,
To knock down a Bard by a flaming *bon mot*.
To your ſex indeed his chief failings I trace;
For the fair-ones ſo flatter'd his figure and face,
That too early he ceas'd the chaſte Muſes to follow,
And being Adonis, would not be Apollo.

MRS. FELIX.

Yet he has much fancy.

SAPPHIC.

O, Madam, no doubt,
And genius that ſtudy would ſoon have brought out.

Had

Had his thoughts been leſs turn'd to his legs and his looks,
Ere this he 'd have written ſome excellent books:
'Tis pity ſuch parts ſhould thro' indolence fall;
But he never compoſes, and reads not at all.

SELINA.

Not read, Mr. Sapphic! you ſurely miſtake;
Your friend cannot be an illiterate rake:
Our neighbours, who lately from London came down,
Declare, that his word forms the taſte of the town!

SAPPHIC.

Dear Madam, the buſineſs is eaſily done;
He judges all authors, but never reads one.

MRS. FELIX.

I 'm ſure he muſt own this *impromptu* is ſweet,
And I vow he ſhall read it—

SAPPHIC.

Dear Ma'am, I intreat,
I conjure you to ſpare me; this earneſt petition
I know you will grant me—

MRS. FELIX.

On this one condition,
That for ſix lines ſuppreſs'd you indulge me with twenty:

Come,

Come, ſhew us your pocket-book—there you have plenty
Of tender poetical ſquibs for the Fair.

SAPPHIC, *taking out his pocket-book.*

Dear Ma'am here is nothing.

MRS. FELIX.

A volume, I ſwear,
O, charming! well, now you 're an excellent man;
'Tis ſtuff'd like a pincuſhion—

SAPPHIC.

Yes, Ma'am—with bran.

MRS. FELIX.

Fie, fie, you 're too modeſt, and murder my meaning;
What a harveſt is here! yet I aſk but a gleaning:
It would not be fair to ſeize all the collection,
Tho' all is moſt certainly worthy inſpection.
Indulge us, dear Sir: come, I'll take no refuſal.

SAPPHIC.

Indeed, Ma'am, here 's nothing that 's fit for peruſal.

MRS. FELIX.

There are fifty fine things, and one can't chuſe amiſs.

SAPPHIC, *taking out a paper.*

Here 's one new little ſong—

MRS. FELIX.

Well then, let me have this.

SAPPHIC, *after giving a paper.*

They all are ſo jumbled, I fear I am wrong;
I meant to have ſhewn you a new little ſong,
Which was written laſt week on the ball at our races,
Where I heard the Miſs Trotters compar'd to the Graces;
I could not help ſaying, 'twas very profane,
It was taking the name of the Graces in vain.

MRS. FELIX *reads.*

" *On ſeeing Selina and Jenny near each other in*
" *the garden.*"

SAPPHIC.

O mercy, dear Madam, you muſt not read thoſe!
A ſtanza unfiniſh'd.—

MRS. FELIX.

How ſweetly it flows!
Selina, pray hear it.

SELINA, *aſide to* MRS. FELIX.

Dear Couſin enough!
How can you delight in his horrible ſtuff!

MRS.

MRS. FELIX *reads.*

" Tho' each in the ſame garden blows,
" The poet muſt be crazy,
" Who, when invited by the roſe,
" Can ſtoop to pick the daiſy."

SELINA, *aſide to* MRS. FELIX.

If you love me, dear Couſin, aſſiſt me, I pray,
To end all this nonſenſe, and get him away.—
Pray, Sir, when you came, was my Uncle below?

SAPPHIC.

He's abroad, Ma'am, your ſervant inform'd me—

SELINA.

O No!

You have heard he is building a temple to Pan,
And we hope that your taſte may embelliſh the plan:
At the end of the walk, in his favourite grove,
Where there formerly ſtood an old ruin'd alcove,
You'll find him; and as 'tis an art you are ſkill'd in,
Twill pleaſe him to know what you think of the building.

MRS. FELIX.

Aye do, Mr Sapphic, inſpect what is done,
For the workmen all blunder'd when firſt they begun:
Your opinion I'm ſure will oblige the good Knight.

SELINA.

An inſcription, he once ſaid, he wiſh'd you to write.

SAPPHIC.

Dear Madam!—the hint is delightful, I vow;
To the God of Arcadia I haſten to bow:
I ſhall find the good Knight in the midſt of the dome;
I am heartily glad that he is not from home.
We ſhall ſurely contrive ſomething clever between us,
And the Muſe will compoſe by the order of Venus.

[*Bows tenderly to* Selina, *and Exit.*

SELINA.

How could you ſo praiſe that impertinent creature?
And praiſe him without diſcompoſing a feature!—
I could not have thought, before this converſation,
That your frankneſs could turn into ſuch adulation.

MRS. FELIX.

The World, my dear Child, is to you quite unknown;
When you ſee it you'll find ſuch diſcourſe is the *ton*;
Fine folks in high life learn to praiſe with great glee
Such perſons and things as they ſicken to ſee.
To me your beſt thanks for my ſpeeches are due—
By thus flattering the Poet, I ſurely ſerve you;

He will now play the Sky-lark inſtead of the Dove,
And ſtun me with ſongs, while you 're ſav'd from his love.

Enter Jenny.

JENNY.

Dear Ma'am, now I hope Mr. Sapphic 's quite bleſt,
For he flies thro' the walks like a bird to his neſt.—
He 's a ſweet pretty gentleman.

MRS. FELIX, *aſide to* Selina.

This, if I ſhew it,
Will ſoon baniſh Jenny's regard for the poet :—
Jenny, ſee what your friend Mr. Sapphic has written.

JENNY.

Dear Ma'am, with his verſes I always am ſmitten.

(Having read the ſtanza.)

A Daiſy indeed! to be ſure I am neat,
But tho' I 'm a ſervant I hope I am ſweet.
When he makes my young Miſtreſs a Roſe or a Lilly,
He might turn me at leaſt to a Daffy-down-dilly.
But a Daiſy, forſooth! with no fragrance at all!—
I 'll croſs him for this—

SELINA.

What 's that noiſe in the hall?

JENNY.

JENNY.

As ſure as I live 'tis your other gay Spark,
For I ſaw a new chaiſe driving into the park.—
I'll ſee, Ma'am.

(Aſide going out)

I 'll ſhew this fine Poet a trick—
A Daiſy! that no one but children will pick. [*Exit.*

MRS. FELIX.

This ſimile Jenny I ſee cannot ſwallow,
And her anger may ruin this ſon of Apollo;
For in courtſhip this maxim is often diſplay'd,
He has half loſt the Miſtreſs who loſes the Maid.

Enter Deciſive.

DECISIVE.

Alone, my dear Ladies!—they told me below,
Our friend Sapphic was here, your poetical Beau;
I was almoſt afraid that my ſudden intruſion
Might check the rich ſtream of ſome lyric effuſion.

(To Selina.*)*

I 'm happy to ſee you ſo lovely to-day;
But I hope I 've not frighted your Poet away.

SELINA.

O no—Mr. Sapphic had bid us adieu—

MRS. FELIX.

And not without ſaying ſome fine things of you:
He declares, that with thoſe brilliant parts you poſſeſs,
'Tis a ſin you ne'er ſend any work to the preſs.

DECISIVE.

Good Sapphic!—In truth 'tis his comfort to think
The whole duty of man lies in ſpilling of ink;
And at Paradiſe gate his large volumes of metre
Will I hope be allow'd a fair paſs by Saint Peter.

MRS. FELIX.

Then the Saint muſt be free from your critical ſpirit,
For I know you have little eſteem for their merit;
You're a rigorous judge, and to poets terrific.

DECISIVE.

I wiſh my friend's muſe was not quite ſo prolific:
But in rhymes when a child I have heard he would ſqueak,
And ſo proved a poet before he could ſpeak;
On his death-bed, I doubt not, he'll ſtill think of verſe,
And groan out a rhyme to his doctor or nurſe.

MRS.

MRS. FELIX.

I fancy your favourite reading is proſe;
Here 's a new ſet of travels, pray have you read thoſe?

DECISIVE, *taking the book.*

This author is lucky to meet with a buyer:
A traveller 's but a ſoft word for a liar.
Such works may pleaſe thoſe who have ne'er been abroad,
But men, who have travell'd, perceive all the fraud.

MRS. FELIX.

Is the work ſo deceitful! it ſeems you have read it?

DECISIVE.

Not a ſyllable, Madam—

MRS. FELIX.

Pray who then has ſaid it?

DECISIVE.

Not a ſoul that I know—but ſuch books are a trade,
And I perfectly know how thoſe volumes are made.

MRS. FELIX.

'Tis a work, I am told, that has great reputation
Both for wit and for truth—

DECISIVE.

We 're a credulous nation—

MRS. FELIX.

Pray what kind of books are your favourite ſtudy?

DECISIVE.

I find modern works only make the brain muddy,
As my friends grew by reading more awkward than wiſe,
And ruin'd their perſons and clouded their eyes;
I have wiſely reſolv'd not to read any more,
Since each living author is turn'd to a *bore*.

MRS. FELIX.

How can you ſo waſte all your bright mental powers?
'Tis pity you men have not ſuch works as ours—
What d'ye ſay to my knotting?

(Takes out her work.)

DECISIVE.

Your box wants a hinge.
And I'll give you a much better pattern for fringe;
I brought it from France.

MRS. FELIX.

Now I ſee, my good friend,
There is no kind of work which your ſkill cannot mend:
In all arts you poſſeſs a diſtinguiſhing head,
From building a temple to knotting a thread.

DECISIVE.

DECISIVE.

A-propos of a temple—pray has the good Knight
Rais'd his altar to Pan?—he had fix'd on the ſite.
Is the ſtructure begun?—I have not ſeen his plan—

MRS. FELIX.

Then haſten, and pay your devotions to Pan.
Sir Nicholas now in his veſtibule ſtands,
To guide all his workmen and quicken their hands;
And Sapphic is gone to attend the good Knight,
And try what inſcription his genius can write.

DECISIVE.

Poor Pan! by the Graces thou'rt left in the lurch;
Thy temple will look like a trim pariſh church,
With Sapphic's inſcriptions, like ſcraps of the Bible.
Put up, as the Church-wardens ſay, in a *libel*.

MRS. FELIX.

Indeed we much fear ſo—pray haſte to inſpect it,
And exert all your exquiſite taſte to correct it.

DECISIVE.

Ma'am I'll do what I can, for it puts me in wrath
To ſee a fine temple diſgrac'd by a Goth. [*Exit.*

MRS. FELIX.

Well, my dear, your two Lovers, like true men of faſhion,
Do not peſter you much with the heat of their paſſion:
You'll be quite at your eaſe—thanks to Pan and the Muſe!

Enter Jenny, *haſtily.*

JENNY.

News! news! my dear Ladies, moſt excellent news!

SELINA.

The girl is quite wild!

MRS. FELIX.

What tranſports you ſo, Jenny?

JENNY.

I've news for you, Madam, that's well worth a guinea:
I have news from the Colonel—

MRS. FELIX.

A letter! Where is it?

JENNY.

No, Ma'am, here's a ſtranger arriv'd on a viſit,
And he comes from the place where the Colonel is fighting.

MRS. FELIX.

And with letters for me?

JENNY.

Madam, that I'm not right in;

For I run from his man when I got half my ſtory;
But the Colonel, he ſays, is all riches and glory.

MRS. FELIX.

Dear girl that's enough; through my life I ſhall feel
Due regard for thy warm and affectionate zeal.
But where is this Stranger?

JENNY.

Juſt walk'd to my Maſter.
His poor man has met with a cruel diſaſter;
He was wounded in battle.

SELINA.

Pray treat him with care.—
In your joy, my dear Couſin, I heartily ſhare.

MRS. FELIX.

This Stranger's a jewel for you from the Eaſt;
He's a Captain, I hope, my dear Jenny, at leaſt.

JENNY.

Ah, Madam! my fancy ſuppos'd him ſo too;
But we're both in the wrong, and for Miſs he won't do,
For I learnt from his man he is only a Doctor.

MRS. FELIX.

Poor Jane, how the difference of title has ſhock'd her!

For my part I can't find by my reaſon or feeling,
That the art of deſtroying excels that of healing:
We may equally love the profeſſors of both.

JENNY.

That Miſs tho' ſhould marry a Doctor I'm loth.

MRS. FELIX.

Come, my dear, let us meet 'em—I can't reſt above—
How ſlowly fly letters from hands that we love!

End of ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Enter Jenny *and* Jonathan.

JENNY.

COME, dear Mr. Jonathan, tell me the whole:
An account of a battle I love to my ſoul;
There is nothing on earth I ſo truly delight in,
As to hear a brave Soldier diſcourſe about fighting.—

So the Colonel was wounded you ſay near the wall:
Whereabouts was the ſhot? Did he inſtantly fall?

JONATHAN.

No; recoiling a little he ruſh'd on again,
And fought like a lion, made fiercer by pain;
Tho' a curſed keen arrow an Indian let fly,
Pierc'd the bone of his cheek juſt below the right eye.
'Twas a horrible wound! but it could not appal him.

JENNY.

O mercy! that ſuch a hard fate ſhould befal him.
Alas! I'm afraid that his fine manly face
Muſt have loſt by the ſcar all its ſpirit and grace.
Does he look very hideous?

JONATHAN.

No; thanks to my Maſter,
You can hardly perceive that he e'er wore a plaiſter.
There never was known a more wonderful cure;
But kind Heaven aſſiſts my good Maſter I'm ſure;
Without it the ſkill of no mortal could ſave
The many brave lads he has kept from the grave.
You would weep with delight to behold him ſurrounded
With a hundred fine fellows once horribly wounded;

Who with thanks for their lives are ſtill eager to greet him,
And hail him with bleſſings whenever they meet him.

JENNY.

God reward him, ſay I, for the good he has done;
And of thoſe he has ſav'd I 'm glad you are one.

JONATHAN.

Aye, twice he preſerv'd me when all thought me dead,
And once brought me off at the riſque of his head.
It was not his buſineſs to mix in the ſtrife,
And ſome thought him mad when he ventur'd his life
To bring off a poor mangled private like me;
But I've ſtill a heart left in this trunk that you ſee,
Which loves the brave ſpirit who ſnatch'd me from death,
And will ſerve him, I hope, till my very laſt breath.

JENNY.

Your ſcenes of hard ſervice I hope are all over;
It is now fairly time you ſhould both live in clover.
Your Maſter, I truſt, has brought home as much treaſure
As will make him a parliament-man at his pleaſure;
And to recompence you for the wound in your arm,
Perhaps he will buy you a ſnug little farm.

JONATHAN.

JONATHAN.

When a Gentleman comes from the Eaſt, my good girl,
You all think he is loaded with diamonds and pearl;
You fancy his treaſure too great to be told,
And ſuppoſe he poſſeſſes a mountain of gold.
A few daring blades, by a bold kind of ſtealth,
Have indeed from the Indies brought home ſo much wealth,
That with all their keen ſenſes they ne'er could employ it,
And have dy'd from the want of a heart to enjoy it:
But ſome hundred brave lads, whom gay youth led to enter
That promiſing region of hope and adventure,
Have toil'd many years in thoſe rich-burning climes,
With ſmall ſhare of their wealth, and with none of their crimes.
Now my Maſter and I both belong to this tribe;
Not a ſingle Nabob have we kill'd for a bribe;
And to tell you a truth, which I hope you 'll not doubt,
We're as poor and as honeſt as when we ſet out.

JENNY.

What! your Maſter ſtill poor in ſo thriving a trade!
And with patients ſo rich has he never been paid
For the wounds he has heal'd?

JONATHAN.

JONATHAN.

Yes, my dear, for his fees
I know he has touch'd many thouſand rupees;
But the ſight of diſtreſs he could never endure;
What he took from the rich he beſtow'd on the poor.

JENNY.

Well, Heaven will pay him, no doubt, in due ſeaſon.
But what brings him home?—I would fain know the reaſon
Why he leaves that rich land in the bloom of his life:
I ſuppoſe from the want of a cherry-cheek'd wife?
They ſay thoſe black wenches are ſad naſty creatures,
And tho' they've fine ſhapes they have horrible features.
Does he want a white ſweet-heart? or has he a Black?

JONATHAN.

'Tis indeed a white woman that brings us both back:
But alas! 'tis an old one—my Maſter, it ſeems,
Has a fond ſimple mother that's troubled with dreams,
And he, like a tender and ſoft-hearted youth,
Reſigns his fine proſpect, and comes home forſooth
Becauſe the old dame has expreſs'd her deſires
To ſee him in England before ſhe expires:
And egad ſince he's come ſhe will live long enough,
For ſhe ſeems to be made of good durable ſtuff.

JENNY.

JENNY.

Well, now I ſhall love him a hundred times more
Than I did for the ſtories you told me before.
God bleſs the kind ſoul! who behaves to his mother
As if he well knew he could ne'er have another;
And were he my ſon I could not live without him;
I could ſtay here all day while you're talking about him.—
But 'tis time to be gone; we muſt both diſappear,
For the Colonel's ſweet Wife and your Maſter are here.

JONATHAN.

Stop, I muſt peep at her;—ſhe's as bright as the day!

JENNY.

And her heart is as good as her ſpirit is gay—
Come I'll ſhew you our walks—we may get out this way.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter Mrs. Felix *and* Morley.

MRS. FELIX.

Dear excellent Friend, ſince I owe to your worth
The ſafety of what I moſt value on earth,
With thoſe it loves beſt my heart yields you a place,
And I claſp your kind hand with a ſiſter's embrace.
To judge of the man whom ſuch ſervice endears
I want not the tardy acquaintance of years,

But

But in ſtrong tho' quick ties, that no chances can ſever,
In an inſtant he ſeizes my friendſhip for ever:
And had I much leſs obligation to you,
My regard and eſteem I ſhould ſtill think your due,
From the picture my Felix has drawn of your mind.

MORLEY.

His warm ſoul to his friends is moſt partially kind:
But ſuch as I am I moſt truly am yours;
Your goodneſs my grateful attachment enſures,
And my heart with proud tranſport your friendſhip embraces.
Tho' I ne'er gaz'd before on your perſonal graces,
I've beguil'd ſome long weeks of hard weariſome duty
With frequent diſcourſe on your virtues and beauty;
And I own for the Colonel it rais'd my eſteem,
To mark with what pleaſure he dwelt on the theme.

MRS. FELIX.

You're an excellent creature to ſooth a fond Wife,
Who regards her Lord's love hardly leſs than his life;
But ſince you've replied with good humour ſo ſteady
To the ten thouſand queſtions I've aſk'd you already,
I'll ſpare you to-day, and if 'tis in my power
Mention Felix's name only once in an hour.

That my thoughts to the Indies no longer may roam,
Let me talk to you now about matches at home;
Your counſel may make our perplexity leſs,
And finiſh our odd tragi-comic diſtreſs.
Firſt tell me, and ſpeak without any diſguiſe,
(Tho' I fancy I read all your thoughts in your eyes)
What d' ye think of my Couſin?

MORLEY.

Her graces indeed
The glowing deſcription of Felix exceed;
Tho' in praiſing her, oft he with pleaſure has ſmil'd
Like a father deſcribing his favourite child.
For my part, I think ſhe is laviſhly bleſt
With thoſe beauties by which the pure mind is expreſt,
That her heart is with truth and with tenderneſs warm,
That ſweet ſenſibility ſhines in her form;
A form, on which no man his eye ever turn'd
Without feeling his breaſt in her welfare concern'd.
'Tis the lot of ſuch graces, wherever they dwell,
None can ſee their ſoft miſtreſs and not wiſh her well.

MRS. FELIX.

Very gallantly ſaid, and the praiſe is her due—
But how came her Lovers ſo well known to you?

MORLEY.

Her Lovers!—dear Madam, I hope you 're in jeſt—
Or if by their vows your ſweet Friend is addreſt,
Heaven grant, for the peace of her delicate mind,
That her hand may be never to either reſign'd!

MRS. FELIX.

From my ſoul I aſſure you I join in your prayer;
But whence does it ſpring?

MORLEY.

I will freely declare,
Tho' they 're both men of fortune, fair birth, and good name,
With figures that ſet ſome young nymphs in a flame;
Tho' at each, many ladies are ready to catch
At what the world calls, a moſt excellent match;
Yet, if I have read your fair Couſin aright,
A boſom ſo tender, a ſpirit ſo bright,
Muſt be wretched with ſuch a companion for life,
As each of theſe Lovers would prove to his Wife.

MRS. FELIX.

You are right; but their characters where could you know?

MORLEY.

I knew them at college a few years ago,

Before,

Before, by a whimſical odd ſort of fate,
And ſome family loſſes, too long to relate,
In Europe my views of proſperity ceas'd,
And chance ſent me forth to my friends in the Eaſt.

MRS. FELIX.

Pray what ſort of youths were theſe two modiſh men?

MORLEY.

You now find them both what they ſeem'd to me then;
Two characters form'd like moſt young men of faſhion,
Whoſe cold ſelfiſh pride is their ſovereign paſſion:
In each, tho' they 're men of an oppoſite turn,
The ſame heart-freezing vanity ſtill you diſcern.
To indulge that dear vanity, each ſtill diſplays
All the force of his mind, tho' in different ways.
Thence, in ſpinning weak verſe Sapphic's toil never ends,
And Deciſive ne'er ſtops in deriding his friends;
Each equally fancies no nymph can reſiſt
His lips, which he thinks all the Graces have kiſt.

MRS. FELIX.

Perfect knowledge of both your juſt picture has ſhown!—
The warmth of theſe Lovers diverts me I own.

Of conqueſt each ſeems to himſelf very clear,
And feels from his rivals no diffident fear.
'Tis eaſy to ſee from their ſatisfied air,
Each loves his own perſon much more than the Fair.
But my poor gentle Coz wiſhes both at a diſtance;
And I want to contrive, by your friendly aſſiſtance,
To relieve her, and quietly ſend them from hence
Without the Knight's knowledge.

MORLEY.

As neither wants ſenſe,
Can't the Lady pronounce their diſmiſſion at once,
Which none can miſtake but an impudent dunce?

MRS. FELIX.

This meaſure ſeems eaſy indeed at firſt view;
But alas! 'tis a meaſure we dare not purſue.
Our warm-hearted, whimſical, poſitive Knight,
Allows not to woman this natural right;
And hence my young Friend, in a pitiful caſe,
Knows not how to reject what ſhe ne'er can embrace;
For nothing her Uncle's reſentment would ſmother,
Should ſhe baniſh one ſuitor, and not take the other.

MORLEY.

Then indeed I am griev'd for the Lady's diſtreſs;
But how can I aid her?

MRS. FELIX.

'Tis hard, I confeſs,
To a ſudden retreat this bold Pair to oblige,
And make two ſuch Heroes abandon a ſiege;
Yet I wiſh we could do it—and when they recede,
The departure of both muſt appear their own deed.

MORLEY, *after a pauſe.*

Well—my friendſhip for you has ſuggeſted a ſcheme.

MRS. FELIX.

'Tis a ſervice our hearts will for ever eſteem.
But what is your project?

MORLEY.

Don't queſtion me what,
Leſt you think me a fool for too ſimple a plot:
'Tis ſimple, and yet I would venture my life
It will drive from theſe Beaus all the thoughts of a Wife;
And if my ſcheme proſpers, with joy I'll confeſs
What a whimſical trifle produc'd our ſucceſs.

MRS.

MRS. FELIX.

Well, keep your own ſecret, if ſilence is beſt;
Tho' a woman, for once I'll in ignorance reſt.—
Here comes our friend Sapphic—he ſeems in a flurry.

MORLEY.

His ſtep ſhews indeed a poetical hurry,
And we ſhall be call'd in as Goſſips, fair neighbour,
For by the Bard's buſtle his Muſe is in labour.

Enter Sapphic.

SAPPHIC.

Dear Ma'am! may I aſk you for paper and ink,
Leſt a freſh *jeu d'eſprit* in oblivion ſhould ſink?
For when my free fancy has brought forth my verſe,
My treacherous memory proves a bad nurſe.

MRS. FELIX.

O pray! for your Muſe let us rear her young chit,
For the bantling no doubt muſt have ſpirit and wit;
As a cradle to hold it, I beg you 'll take that,

(giving him a paper.)

And your Friend here will aid you in dreſſing the Brat;
At a rite ſo important I merit no place,
And I beg to withdraw while you 're waſhing its face.

[*Exit.*

SAPPHIC.

SAPPHIC.

That 's a charming gay Creature—luxuriant and young—
But I've loſt half a ſtanza—the deuce take her tongue;—
Let me ſee—let me ſee if I can 't recollect it.—
'Tis done;—and now, Morley, pray hear or inſpect it.

MORLEY.

The Poet himſelf his own verſe ſhould recite.

SAPPHIC.

You 're a ſenſible fellow—your maxim is right.

(Reads.)

" Thy old Arcadia, Pan, reſign,
" For this more rich retreat:
" A fairer nymph here decks thy ſhrine;
" Be this thy fav'rite ſeat."

Well, my Friend, won't this bring the old God out of Greece?

MORLEY.

Aye, and make good Sir Nicholas give you his Niece.

SAPPHIC.

Yes, I fancy this ſtanza will make the Girl mine.

MORLEY.

What Poet can wiſh for a prize more divine?

I give you much joy on your conqueſt, my Friend;
Yet the eyes of regret on your nuptials I bend,
And grieve in reflecting, that conjugal joy
Your poetical harveſt of Fame muſt deſtroy.

SAPPHIC.

What the deuce do you mean?

MORLEY.

To thoſe great works adieu
Which the world now expects with impatience from you.
The Poet when bleſt can no more be ſublime,
And a chill matrimonial muſt ſtrike thro' his rhyme.

SAPPHIC.

You 're miſtaken, dear Doctor—connubial delight
Will give a new zeſt to each poem I write;
And you 'll ſee ſuch productions!—

MORLEY.

'Tis true, now and then
Polemics by marriage have quicken'd their pen.
A Dutch Critic I know, by the aid of his Wife,
Made a book and a child every year of his life.
But total ſecluſion from Venus and Bacchus,
Is, you know, to the Bard recommended by Flaccus.

A grand

A grand epic poem I hear you are writing;
'Tis a work that your country will take great delight in:
But conſider, my Friend, when you 're deep in heroics,
As Poets have not all the patience of Stoics,
How you 'll grieve to be check'd in the flow of your verſe,
By a young ſqualling child and an old ſcolding nurſe;
E'en the qualms of your Lady may drive from your brain
Fine thoughts that you ne'er can recover again;
Reflect how you 'll feel, with ſuch hopes of ſucceeding,
If your Muſe ſhould miſcarry becauſe your Wife's breeding.

SAPPHIC.

Egad, in that caſe I ſhould think my fate hard.

MORLEY.

I myſelf have beheld an unfortunate Bard,
Who his nails for a rhyme unſucceſsfully bit,
When family cares had extinguiſh'd his wit.
With many who ſing in the Muſe's full choir,
It would do them no miſchief to muffle their lyre;
But for you, whom the Nine, with a tender preſage,
Are prepar'd to proclaim the firſt Bard of our age;
For you, who of Taſte are the favourite theme—

SAPPHIC.

Yes, I think I ſtand high in the public eſteem.—

MORLEY.

For you, I ſhould grieve if domeſtic delight
On your fair riſing laurels ſhould fall as a blight.
'Tis the pride of great minds whom the Muſes inflame,
To ſacrifice joy on the altar of Fame:
Your paſſion's renown—of this Girl are you fonder?—
On this delicate point I muſt leave you to ponder;
Conſider it, while I attend the old Knight. [*Exit.*

SAPPHIC *alone (after a pauſe.)*

By Jove, I believe my friend Morley is right.
Thou, Fame, art my Miſtreſs; to win thee I ſing.
This Girl, tho' ſhe's handſome, is but a dull thing.
'Tis clear, whenſoe'er I a poem rehearſe,
That ſhe has no reliſh for elegant verſe.—
Her fortune indeed would be rather convenient,
But the glorious to me is before the expedient.
Egad I'd quit Venus herſelf, if I knew
That the ſyſtem of Morley was certainly true.
I don't think the Girl to Deciſive inclin'd;
But here comes her Maid, who may tell me her mind.

Enter Jenny.

My good little Jenny, you're truſty and true,
And your Miſtreſs, I know, tells her ſecrets to you.

What

What you know, to a friend you may ſafely impart,
And give me a perfect account of her heart:
Pray how do I ſtand in your Lady's regard?

JENNY.

Now's my time to be even with this ſaucy Bard. *(aſide.)*
To be ſure, Sir, the taſte of my Lady is odd;
But poetry moves her no more than a clod.

SAPPHIC.

What! no reliſh for rhyme!—Does ſhe never repeat
The ſoft little ſonnets I've laid at her feet?

JENNY.

Ah, Sir! would my Miſtreſs were once of my mind,
(For I read all the verſes of yours that I find)
But my Lady's ſo cruel ſhe thwarts my deſire,
And to hide them from me throws them into the fire.

SAPPHIC.

She's a fool—ſhe's a fool *(aſide.)*---I ſhould have a fine life,
With ſuch a proſaic dull jade of a wife.

JENNY.

But, my good Sir, I hope you will not be dejected,
I could tell you by whom all your wit is reſpected.

There's a heart upon which you have made ſuch impreſſion—
But I muſt not betray her by my indiſcretion.

SAPPHIC.

Whom d'ye mean, my good Jenny? come, tell me, my dear.

JENNY.

You would make a bad uſe of the ſecret I fear.—
Now I hope I ſhall lead the Bard into a ſcrape, *(aſide.)*
For he bites like a Gudgeon, and cannot eſcape.

SAPPHIC.

Come, ſay who 's in love with me—if ſhe is fair,
I 'll not leave the dear creature, I vow, to deſpair.

JENNY.

O lud! I proteſt ſhe is coming this way;
But I did not intend her regard to betray.
I muſt fly—but I beg that you 'll not be too free. [*Exit.*

SAPPHIC.

Madam Felix!—I thought ſhe was partial to me.

Enter Mrs. Felix.

MRS. FELIX.

May I enter without incommoding the Muſe?

SAPPHIC.

By a queſtion like this your own charms you abuſe.

Thoſe

Thoſe eyes, my dear Madam, were form'd, I profeſs,
To inſpirit a Poet, and not to depreſs;
From your preſence he ſurely muſt catch inſpiration.

MRS. FELIX.

A very poetical fine ſalutation!
But I ſeriouſly beg, if you're buſy with rhyme,
That you will not allow me to take up your time.
As I'm not Selina, you're free from reſtriction,
And may tell me plain truths, unembelliſh'd with fiction.

SAPPHIC.

Then I ſwear, my dear Creature, I ſwear by this hand,
That I feel as I touch it my genius expand;
That your lips—O by Jove! he's a madman or booby,
Who roves to the Indies for diamond or ruby;
And each vein in my heart his ſtrange folly condemns,
Who leaves theſe more bright and more exquiſite gems.
Sweet Fair! let me keep, while their richneſs I praiſe,
The cold damp of neglect from o'erclouding their rays.

(While Mr. Sapphic *kiſſes* Mrs. Felix *with great vehemence,* Jenny *enters unperceived.)*

JENNY.

O ho!—have I caught you; impertinent Poet!
This is more than I hop'd for—my Maſter ſhall know it.

[*Exit.*

Good

MRS. FELIX.

Good God! Mr. Sapphic, what frantic illuſion
Has produc'd this ridiculous ſcene of confuſion?
All Poets are Quixotes in love, I am told;
And the truth of the adage in you I behold.
As the Knight once miſtook an old mill for a giant,
Your ſenſe as diſorder'd, your fancy as pliant,
Takes me for my Couſin—your love's ebullition
I only can pardon on this ſuppoſition.
I fain would ſuppoſe that no inſult was meant,
Nor believe you could think, what I ought to reſent.

SAPPHIC.

O! talk not of anger with lips that inſpire
The ſtrongeſt ſenſation of rapturous fire,
That with love's ſweet convulſions ſhake every nerve:
O! think not that I your reſentment deſerve;
Becauſe my warm heart, thus engroſs'd by your charms,
Is ambitious of filling theſe dear empty arms.
No, let me while baſking beneath your bright eye,
The place of a thankleſs deſerter ſupply;
And in this melting breaſt kindle ecſtacy's flame,
Which Nature deſign'd for ſo glowing a frame.

MRS.

MRS. FELIX.

Away, Sir! and ſince in your fondling inſanity
You reject the excuſe which I form'd for your vanity,
My threats muſt inform you—

SAPPHIC.

O! frown not, ſweet Creature;
Let not wrath ſpoil the charm of thy every feature.

MRS. FELIX.

Regain you your ſenſe—from my wrath you are free,
Which ſhould not be rais'd by a being like thee;
Begone then!—my pardon in vain you'll implore,
If you dare on this ſubject to breathe a word more.

SAPPHIC.

Words, indeed, my warm fair one, by Nature's confeſſion,
For the love that I feel, are no proper expreſſion;
The ſoul's fond intent in ſoft murmurs ſhould ſwell,
And kiſſes explain what no language can tell.
Ye Gods, how luxuriant!

MRS. FELIX.

Away! quit my arm!
Or my cries in an inſtant the houſe ſhall alarm.

SAPPHIC.

Provoking ſweet Creature!—indulge my fond paſſion;
Come, come, don't I know you're a woman of faſhion?

Your coyneſs, I've heard, you can ſometimes give over;
And I'm ſure you're too wiſe to be true to a rover.
Beſides, I have learnt, that with partial regard
You have caſt a kind eye on your ill-treated Bard.

MRS. FELIX.

Away! thou vain coxcomb! nor, baſe as thou art,
Inſult the bright Lord of ſo loyal a heart;
Begone!—I abhor thee—my perſon releaſe!—

SIR NICHOLAS, *entering.*

Is it thus, my young Sir, you pay court to my Niece!

SAPPHIC.

Confuſion! What devil has ſent the old Knight?

SIR NICHOLAS.

How dare you, pert Stripling, almoſt in my ſight
To inſult a chaſte Female that's under my roof?—
But ſince of your baſeneſs you give me ſuch proof,
You ſhall feel it repaid by a proper correction.

SAPPHIC *(aſide.)*

Deuce take this perverſe and unlucky detection:
I wiſh I had wiſely, as Morley had taught me,
Renounc'd that jade Venus before he thus caught me.
What excuſe can I make him?—*(To* Sir Nicholas) My
dear worthy Sir,
Tho' I now ſeem moſt juſtly your wrath to incur,

Yet

Yet as you grow cool, your opinion will vary,
You will not reſent much an idle vagary,
A mere romping frolic—

SIR NICHOLAS.

A frolic, d'ye ſay!
Then a frolic of mine ſhall your frolic repay.
Call our Servants to puniſh this frolicſome Spark,
They ſhall drag him acroſs the new pond in the park.

SAPPHIC *(aſide.)*

'Tis what he can't mean—yet his countenance ſuch is,
I wiſh from my ſoul I was out of his clutches.—

(To Sir Nicholas.)

Dear Sir, I aſſure you, I'm griev'd beyond meaſure
That I thus have awaken'd your furious diſpleaſure;
When calmer—

SIR NICHOLAS.

Young Man, I am not in a fury,
A ſentence more juſt never came from a jury;
Such frolics as yours have Old England diſgrac'd:
In High Life let them flouriſh as Faſhion and Taſte.
To thoſe wanton young fellows I am not ſevere,
Who attack the looſe Wife of a vain gambling Peer.

My Lady whoſe Lord waſtes at Hazard the night,
May plead to more generous pleaſures ſome right;
I care not how each keeps their conjugal oath,
Since honour and peace muſt be ſtrangers to both.
But when a brave Soldier, pure Glory's true ſon,
Ennobled with laurels laborioufly won;
When riſking in far diſtant climates his life,
To his Country he leaves a fair innocent Wife;
Accurſt be the man, who, to Friendſhip unjuſt,
Fails to guard as his ſoul this moſt delicate truſt;
Or to puniſh thoſe Fops who inſult her chaſte beauty,
And invite her to ſwerve from her honour and duty.
Of the doom that I think to ſuch Libertines due,
I will give to the world an example in you.
Our old Engliſh diſcipline, Ducking, by name,
Shall atone for your outrage, by quenching your flame.
Here! William and John—

MRS. FELIX.

For my ſake, I intreat
That you will not, dear Sir, this rough vengeance compleat.

SIR NICHOLAS.

By Jupiter, Couſin, to make him leſs fond,
He ſhall croak out his love to the frogs of our pond.—

Here,

Here, William! tell Jack after Stephen to ſkip,
And tell the old Huntſman to come with his whip,
Then wait all together around the hall door.

SAPPHIC.

O mercy, dear Sir! I your mercy implore.
You will not deſtroy me?

SIR NICHOLAS.

No, only correct,
And teach you a brave Soldier's Wife to reſpect.

MRS. FELIX.

Yet think, my dear Couſin, yet think, for my ſake,
What a noiſe this ridiculous matter will make.
You know that my Felix's nature is ſuch,
He don't wiſh his Wife to be talk'd of too much;
His honour and quiet let us make our care,
And bury in ſilence this fooliſh affair:
Perhaps, in my manners too eaſy and gay,
My levity led the young Poet aſtray.

SIR NICHOLAS.

No, no! my good Creature, you muſt not arraign
Your innocent ſelf in a buſineſs ſo plain:

Beſides, his offence by this plea cannot ſink,
For they are the worſt of all puppies that think
Each woman 's a wanton who is not preciſe,
And that cheerfulneſs muſt be the herald of vice.

MRS. FELIX.

Howe'er this may be—as he 's now all repentance,
I earneſtly beg a repeal of your ſentence.

SAPPHIC.

Dear Ma'am I adore you for this interceſſion;
And I truſt the good Knight will forgive my tranſgreſſion.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Well, Sir, as beyond your deſert you 're befriended
By that virtue which you have ſo groſsly offended,
You are free to depart; but remember, young Swain,
That you ne'er touch the Wife of a Soldier again.

SAPPHIC.

If I do, may I die by the wind of a ball!
Heaven bleſs you, good Folks, and this ſociable hall!
Since my amorous folly your friendſhip thus loſes,
My amours ſhall henceforth be confin'd to the Muſes.

[*Exit.*

MRS.

MRS. FELIX.

I thank you, dear Sir, and rejoice in my heart
That in ſafety you 've ſuffer'd this Youth to depart.

SIR NICHOLAS.

By Jupiter, Coz, I had cool'd your warm Poet,
Had I not been afraid all our neighbours might know it,
And make you the ſubject of ſuch converſation
As I think your nice Colonel would hear with vexation.
Then, ſince for your ſake I have let the Bard go,
Come and aid me to ſettle all matters below:
That my anxious cares in her comfort may ceaſe,
I 'm reſolv'd young Deciſive ſhall marry my Niece.

End of ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Enter Mrs. Felix *and* Selina.

MRS. FELIX.

WELL, my dear, what d' ye think of our medical Friend
Whom the letters of Felix ſo highly commend?
If my gratitude does not my judgment miſlead,
He 's the man in the world who with you might ſucceed:
Tho' gentle, yet manly, tho' baſhful, polite.
Are you not half in love?—

SELINA.

Yes, indeed, at firſt ſight!—
His ſervice to you on my heart is engrav'd,
And I love him, I own, for the life he has ſav'd.
To win me perhaps he might not find it hard,
So eſteem'd as he is by the friends I regard;
But I fancy ſuch thoughts will not enter his brain:
And for my part, inſtead of attracting a Swain,

I only ſhall think, as they heartily vex me,
Of eſcaping from thoſe who already perplex me.

MRS. FELIX.

O make yourſelf eaſy, I pray, on that head;
In the deepeſt diſgrace the poor Poet is fled,
And I truſt that the Critic will ſoon ſhare his fate.
Come with me—I 've a moſt curious tale to relate.
Let us haſte—I perceive that Deciſive is near,
In whoſe preſent diſcourſe I would not interfere.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter Deciſive *and* Morley.

DECISIVE.

So while in the grove I was coolly projecting
New plans for the temple the Knight is erecting,
Our Poet, addicted to amorous ſin,
Grew a little too fond of the Ladies within:
But diſcovery happen'd his paſſion to damp;
And this is the cauſe of his haſte to decamp.

MORLEY.

The old Knight, I believe, ſuch reſentment expreſs'd
As quicken'd the ſpeed of his fugitive gueſt;

On

On Terror's ſwift wing he is certainly flown,
And as he has retreated, the field is your own.

DECISIVE.

As a rival I had not much fear of poor Sapphic;
Bad rhyme 's current coin in moſt amorous traffic,
But would not paſs here.

MORLEY.

I think not in your view,
As it finds ſuch a critical touchſtone in you.
The Poet's diſmiſſion your triumph enſures,
And the prize, my good Friend, is now certainly yours;
A prize, that we juſtly may call very great,
A lovely ſweet Girl with a noble eſtate.

DECISIVE.

The Girl's very well, but knows nothing of life;
It will coſt me ſome pains to new model my Wife;
But I think ſhe will gladly receive my correction,
And my wealthy old Kinſman approve the connection.

(Coughs.)

MORLEY.

You 've a cough, my good Friend,

DECISIVE.

DECISIVE.

Yes, a trifling one: *Hem!*
Have you got any Indian preſcription for phlegm?

MORLEY.

Believe me, that cough is no trifling affair;
It calls, I aſſure you, for caution and care.
With regret I point out ſo unpleaſant a truth,
But your conſtitution I've known from your youth;
Your hectic appearance I ſee with concern,
As I know, with your frame if health takes ſuch a turn,
The leaſt indiſcretion your life may deſtroy.
The ſlighteſt exceſs in diverſion and joy;
Even thoſe tender cares, which on life's pureſt plan
Muſt belong to the ſtate of a Family Man,
May lead to diſeaſe from which art cannot ſave,
And rapidly hurry you into the grave.
'Twere better this courtſhip of yours ſhould miſcarry,
For you'll certainly die in ſix months if you marry.

DECISIVE.

Are you ſerious, dear Doctor?

MORLEY.

By ſuch a ſad end
I lately have loſt a poor good-humour'd friend.

You remember Jack Dangle at College, no doubt;
He was juſt of your age, and a little more ſtout;
He, with other young ſages, left Weſtminſter Hall
To teach Engliſh law to the ſlaves of Bengal.
But Jack, in his new chamber-practice at leaſt,
Too eagerly follow'd the rules of the Eaſt.
A bad cough enſu'd, much like yours in its ſound—
(Deciſive *coughs.)*
Good God! I could ſwear 'twas poor Jack under ground,
'Tis his tone ſo exactly, ſepulchral and hollow!
The ſyſtem he ſlighted I hope you will follow.
With pains in his breaſt he was ſharply tormented;
But as he at firſt to my guidance conſented,
Some time my ſtrict regimen kept him alive,
Poor Dangle once more was beginning to thrive;
And had he ſome months in my plan perſever'd,
On the earth at this moment he might have appear'd;
But chance threw a pretty white girl in his way,
And eager for marriage, fond Jack would not ſtay:
In vain I conjur'd him to wait half a year,
And ſhew'd him the danger he ran very clear.

He thought the remains of his cough but a trifle,
And being unable his paſſion to ſtifle,
He took his fair wife;---but, alas! the vile cough
Encreas'd every day till it carried him off!

DECISIVE.

I don't recollect any pain in my breaſt,
But I feel a ſtrange tightneſs juſt now in my cheſt.

MORLEY.

How 's your ſtomach?

DECISIVE.

I 've nothing to fear on that ſcore.

MORLEY.

Do you eat as you did?

DECISIVE.

Yes, I think rather more.

MORLEY.

That ravenous hunger 's the thing that I dread.
How d'ye ſleep?

DECISIVE.

All the time that I paſs in my bed.

MORLEY.

Indeed!---I don't like ſo lethargic a ſlumber.

DECISIVE.

Why! my Friend! of good ſymptoms theſe rank in the number.

MORLEY.

Alas! you may call them all good if you pleaſe,
By that title you only confirm your diſeaſe,
In which, tho' the patient declines very faſt,
He for ever will flatter himſelf to the laſt.
Believe me, your ſymptoms are rather alarming;
Yet your preſent diſorder there is not much harm in.
If you can but abſtain, with a ſpirit reſign'd,
From all that may harraſs your body or mind,
To a different climate I wiſh you 'd repair,
And for one Winter breathe a leſs changeable air.
Spend a Chriſtmas at Naples, and when you return
You may marry without any anxious concern.
But you 're now at that critical period of life
When, in ſuch frames as yours, nature feels an odd ſtrife,

And, if quiet does not all her functions befriend,
The ſhort earthly ſcene on a ſudden will end.
On a point ſo important you'll pardon my freedom.

DECISIVE.

Your cautions oblige me, I feel that I need 'em,
For in truth I am growing as thin as a rabbit,
And there 's ſomething conſumptive I know in my habit.
My Father died ſoon after taking a Wife,
And cough'd out his ſoul when I jump'd into life:
I ſuppoſe I am going.

MORLEY.

Take courage, my Friend;
On your own prudent conduct your life will depend.
If you take but due care for two years, I'll engage
You will ſtand a fair chance for a healthy old age.
Nor would I adviſe you this Girl to refuſe;
A diſtant attachment your mind will amuſe;
And, no doubt, for a man of your fortune and figure
She will wait till your health has recover'd its vigour.

DECISIVE.

I can part with the Girl without feeling a chaſm
In my heart; that will ſhake with no amorous ſpaſm;

For

For, to tell you the truth, my old rich Uncle Cob
Is more eager than I for this marrying job.
By this ſcheme the old Blade is ſupremely delighted,
Becauſe two large manors may thus be united:
But when of his park I've extended the bound,
It will do me ſmall good if I ſink under ground;
And I 'm not ſuch a fool in theſe projects of pelf,
To humour my friends and endanger myſelf.

MORLEY.

Indeed I 'd not wed for an old Uncle's whim;
But here comes our Knight, I ſhall leave you with him,
As I think you 've ſome delicate points to adjuſt. [*Exit.*

DECISIVE, *alone.*

I 'm in no haſte to ſleep with my Anceſtors' duſt.
'Tis wiſer my weak conſtitution to ſave,
Than to marry, and ſo travel poſt to the grave.

Enter Sir Nicholas.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Come, give me your hand, and rejoice, my young Neighbour,
You 're the man that 's to order the pipe and the tabor;
And by Jove we 'll all dance on ſo joyous a day;
Your wedding, dear Dick, ſhall be ſpeedy and gay;

For

For your Rival is gone with our ſerious diſpleaſure,
And I give to your wiſhes my young lovely Treaſure.—
A treaſure ſhe is, tho' the Girl is my Niece;
Heaven grant ye long years of affection and peace!
And a fine chopping Boy ere the end of the firſt—
Remember that I am to ſee the rogue nurs'd.
Go, you happy young dog, go and ſeal with a kiſs,
And teach the old hall to re-echoe your bliſs.
As I know on this match what Sir Jacob intends,
And we can ſo well truſt each other as friends,
Short contracts will anſwer as well as the beſt,
Our lawyers at leiſure may finiſh the reſt.
I know all ſuſpence in ſuch caſes is hard,
And you ſhall not, I ſwear, from your bliſs be debar'd,
While o'er acres of parchment they're crawling like ſnails.

DECISIVE.

Dear Sir, upon weighing in Reaſon's juſt ſcales
Your very great favours and my weak pretenſion,
I find I'm unworthy of ſuch condeſcenſion,
And muſt, with regret, the high honour reſign,
Which I once vainly thought might with juſtice be mine.

SIR

SIR NICHOLAS.

Hey-day! what does all this formality mean?
Why, Dick! has the Devil poſſeſs'd you with ſpleen?
Or has Love made your mind thus with diffidence ſore?
Falſe modeſty ne'er was your foible before.
You think you're unworthy!—the thought is ſo new,
That I hardly can tell what to ſay or to do.
If you love the good Girl full as much as you ſaid,
I think you have very juſt claims to her bed;
But if your mind 's chang'd, and you feel your love lighter,
'Tis better to ſay ſo, than marry and ſlight her:
And if this be the caſe, Sir, you have your releaſe;
For altho' I am eager to marry my Niece,
Tho' I 'm partial to you, yet I beg you to note,
That I don 't want to cram her down any man's throat.

DECISIVE.

I 'm truly convinc'd of the Lady's perfection,
And 'twould pleaſe me, dear Sir, to preſerve the connection,
Tho' now, by particular reaſons, am led
To reviſit the Continent once ere I wed.

In

In the time of my abſence I can't be exact;
But in what form you pleaſe I will freely contract,
In the courſe of two years to receive as my Wife—

SIR NICHOLAS.

Do you mean to inſult me, you Puppy? Od's-life!
Ere I'd tie my dear Girl to ſo ſilly a Fop
For life, I'd condemn her to trundle a mop.
And let me adviſe you, young man, for the future,
To know your own mind ere you go as a ſuitor.

DECISIVE.

I perceive, Sir, my preſence grows irkſome to you,
And you'll therefore allow me to bid you adieu.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Your departure, indeed, I don't wiſh to reſtrain,
And have little concern when I ſee you again.

[*Exit* Deciſive.

SIR NICHOLAS *alone.*

What can make this pert Puppy recede from his ſuit?
My fair Couſin and he have ſcarce had a diſpute;
She would hardly affront him on purpoſe to vex me!—
Here ſhe comes to explain all the points that perplex me.

Enter Mrs. Felix.

Well, Couſin, my ſcheme for a wedding's ſuſpended,
The Beaux are both gone, and their courtſhip is ended;
With an air ſo myſterious Deciſive withdraws,
I a little ſuſpect you're concern'd as the cauſe:
Confeſs, have you had any words with this Youth?

MRS. FELIX.

Not I, my dear Sir, on my honour and truth.
But I'm ready to own that the news you impart,
With ſurprize and with pleaſure enlivens my heart.
I think your ſweet Niece has a lucky eſcape:
I would almoſt as ſoon ſee her marry an ape
As her union with one of theſe Coxcombs behold;
The Bard is too warm, and the Critic too cold.

SIR NICHOLAS.

I find that they are not ſuch Lads as I thought 'em;
The World all the worſt of its faſhions has taught 'em:
And the World is indeed at a very fine paſs,
When ſuch Puppies inſult ſo attractive a Laſs.
Young Fellows of fortune now think it hard duty
To pay a chaſte homage to Virtue and Beauty.

But I 'll leave theſe pert Fops to their own vile caprice,
And ſoon find a much fitter match for my Niece.
Other orders of men for a huſband I 'll ſearch,
And I think I can ſettle my Girl in the Church.

MRS. FELIX.

Lord, Couſin! I thought you deteſted the Cloth!

SIR NICHOLAS.

Our Rector, I own, often kindles my wrath;
But all Parſons are not like my neighbour, old Squabble,
Who has learnt from his geeſe both to hiſs and to gobble.
We have in our neighbourhood three young Divines,
And each, I believe, to Selina inclines.
Our Biſhop's ſmart Nephew deſerves a ſweet Wench,
He himſelf in due time may be rais'd to the Bench;
With him I ſhould like very well to unite her;
And if he hereafter ſhould riſe to the Mitre,
Then perhaps we together may bring to perfection
A much-wanted plan for the Church's correction.

MRS. FELIX.

A very fine ſcheme which you 'll manage, no doubt!

SIR NICHOLAS.

More wonderful things I have known brought about;

And tho' my firſt plan, as you ſee, has miſcarried,
I 'm reſolv'd that my Niece ſhall be ſpeedily married.
I 'll unite the good Girl to a Prieſt, if I 'm able;
For the young Olive Branch never fails at his table.
There is one I prefer—but to leave the Girl free,
I allow her to make a fair choice of the Three:
I ſhall therefore invite the whole group to the hall,
And I 'll now go and make her write cards to them all.

[*Exit.*

MRS. FELIX *alone.*

What a wonderful creature is this worthy Knight!
To make others happy is all his delight!
Yet, miſled by ſome wild philanthropic illuſion,
He 's for ever involv'd in odd ſcenes of confuſion.
'Tis well that our Critic has made his laſt bow,
I rejoice he 's remov'd, and I long to know how.

Enter Morley.

MORLEY.

Thank my ſtars, my dear Ma'am, I 've diſpatch'd your commiſſion;
Your ſweet Friend is, I hope, in a tranquil condition:
From her two irkſome Lovers ſhe now is reliev'd.

MRS.

MRS. FELIX.

And I'm dying to know how all this was atchiev'd.
Come tell me, good Creature, how could you effect it?

MORLEY.

By a project ſo ſimple you 'd never ſuſpect it:
I have baniſh'd both Swains, by declaring a Wife
Would rob one of glory, and t' other of life.
I perſuaded the Bard his poetical fame
Could never exiſt with a conjugal flame:
Hence he grew with your charms ſo licentiouſly free,
But forgive me this ill which I could not foreſee.
Deciſive, more wiſely, abandons the Fair
To make his own lungs his particular care.

MRS. FELIX.

What! on ſuch points as theſe have they taken your word?

MORLEY.

Dear Madam! mankind credit things moſt abſurd,
When they come from the mouth of a medical man;
Hence Mountebanks never want ſkill to trepan.
The extent of our empire indeed there 's no ſeeing,
When we act on the fears of a true ſelfiſh being.

MRS. FELIX.

How ſimple ſoever the means you 've employ'd,
You have remedy'd ills by which we were annoy'd.
Having thus clear'd the ſcene from each troubleſome Lover,
Can you not for the Nymph a fit Huſband diſcover?
You ſee how ſhe 's preſt by her Uncle to wed,
Who ne'er quits a ſcheme he once takes in his head.—
Suppoſe her kind fancy ſhould lean towards you,
Is your heart quite as free as I 'm ſure 'twould be true?
Is it not pre-engag'd?

MORLEY.

As in mirth's ſportive ſally
It pleaſes you thus a poor pilgrim to rally,
Your good nature I know will forgive me if I
To your pleaſantry make a too ſerious reply.
'Tis my maxim to ſpeak, whatſoe'er be the theme,
With a heart undiſguis'd to the friends I eſteem:
Had I all India's wealth, 'twould be my inclination
To offer it all to your lovely Relation.
But ſuppoſing it poſſible you could be willing
To unite her with one who is ſcarce worth a ſhilling;

Believe

Believe me, dear Madam, my pride is too great
To wiſh her to ſtoop to my humble eſtate.

MRS. FELIX.

Such pride, tho' it reſts upon no ſtrong foundation,
Is noble, I own, and deſerves admiration.
I call it ill-founded, becauſe, in my mind,
If there 's fortune enough for a couple when join'd,
If talents and worth are by each duly ſhar'd,
If in all other points they are equally pair'd,
And mutual regard mutual merit enhances,
It ſignifies not which ſupply'd their finances.

MORLEY.

Your pardon—how often when fortune 's unequal,
Gay weddings produce a moſt turbulent ſequel?
But could I once hope your ſweet Couſin to gain,
How many things are there ſuch hopes to reſtrain?
Suppoſe your dear Colonel, my moſt noble Friend,
Whom ſucceſs to your arms may more ſpeedily ſend!
Suppoſe, having clos'd the bright work he has plan'd,
His return from the Eaſt he ſhould haſten by land;
Suppoſe him arriv'd, with what face could I meet
The man whom my heart ſhould exultingly greet,

If

If he found me attempting, in ſpite of my ſtation,
To wed, tho' a beggar, your wealthy Relation?

MRS. FELIX.

From theſe words, my dear Friend, which I almoſt adore,
And a few ſlighter hints that eſcap'd you before,
I have caught a quick hope, which is fraught with delight,
That I ſoon ſhall be bleſt with my Felix's ſight:
I begin to ſuſpect he's in England already;
I perceive that you can't keep your countenance ſteady.
With his uſual attention his love has reflected
How my poor fooliſh nerves by ſurpriſe are affected;
And leſt they ſhould fail me beyond all revival,
Has ſent you to prepare for his wiſh'd-for arrival.
Am I right in my gueſs? Is he not very near?
Could I truſt my own heart, I ſhould think Felix here.

COLONEL FELIX, *entering*.

Sweet Foreboder, behold him reſtor'd to your arms.

MRS. FELIX.

O my Felix! this tranſport o'erpays all alarms,
Thus to ſee thee reſtor'd, and ennobled with fame!
In what words ſhall affection thy welcome proclaim?

COLONEL.

COLONEL.

My Love! my beſt Treaſure! than glory more dear!
The bliſs of this meeting, which ſhines in thy tear,
That we owe to this Friend let us never forget.

MORLEY.

My ſhare in your tranſport o'erpays all the debt.—
But, Colonel, your fondneſs has travell'd full ſpeed,
And has not allow'd me the time you agreed.

COLONEL.

I meant not, indeed, to have join'd you to-day,
But I found Love forbade my intended delay.

MORLEY.

Well, my duty is done, now you happily meet;
Heaven bleſs you together—

MRS. FELIX.

Stay, ſtay, I entreat;
You muſt not go yet; and before you depart
I will open to Felix the ſcheme of my heart.

SELINA *(behind the ſcene.)*

Indeed, Sir, I never can write ſuch a card.

SIR NICHOLAS *(behind the ſcene.)*

Then you 'll forfeit at once my paternal regard!

COLONEL.

Hey-day! in the houſe I much fear ſomething 's wrong,
As Sir Nicholas talks in a language ſo ſtrong.

MRS. FELIX.

Does he know you are here?

COLONEL.

No, my Dear, I think not,
Unleſs he the tidings from Jenny has got;
She alone ſaw me come, and without much ado
Moſt kindly directed me where to find you.

MRS. FELIX.

They are coming this way—let 's withdraw all together,
And contrive how to turn this loud ſtorm to fair weather.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter Sir Nicholas *and* Selina.

SIR NICHOLAS.

I inſiſt on your writing ſuch cards to them all!

SELINA.

Dear Uncle, I beg you 'll this order recall.
You know your commands I much wiſh to obey;
But reflect on this matter what people will ſay:
You 're ſo eager to marry your Niece, they will ſwear,
That you hawk her about juſt like goods at a fair.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Well, my Dear, let 'em ſay ſo, and I'll ſay ſo too,
For your ſimile proves what a Guardian ſhould do.

He who wants to diſpoſe of a tender young maid,
May take a good hint from the gingerbread trade:
If he has any ſenſe, 'twill be ever his plan
To part with ſoft paſtry as ſoon as he can;
For egad an old maid is like old harden'd paſte,
You may cry it about, but nobody will taſte.
Come, do as I bid you, and take up your pen.

SELINA.

Lord, Sir! it will ſeem very odd to theſe men;
You will make me appear in a horrible light;
I vow my hand ſhakes ſo, I never can write.
Excuſe me, dear Sir, from this buſineſs, pray do,
And let me live ſingle for ever with you.

SIR NICHOLAS.

All buſineſs where woman 's concern'd, I believe,
Muſt partake of the curſe from our Grandmother Eve.
All her Daughters the ſteps of their Parent have follow'd!
Contradiction, the core of the apple ſhe ſwallow'd,
In their veins ſtill fermenting new ills can produce,
And all their blood ſeems Coloquintida juice.—
You froward croſs Baggage! your word ſhould I take,
And bid you live ſingle five years for my ſake,

Of the barbarous Uncle you'd quickly complain,
Who from Nature's juſt right a young Girl wou'd reſtrain!

SELINA.

Indeed, Sir, I ſhould not.

SIR NICHOLAS.

I tell you you wou'd.
From perverſeneſs alone you oppoſe your own good.
'Tis only to thwart me, becauſe I deſire
To ſee you well ſettled before I expire,
That you now with your ſoft hypocritical carriage,
Affect to have no inclination to marriage.
But you 'll never contrive, tho' your tongue may be nimble,
To convince me your heart is as cold as your thimble.
I know of what ſtuff froward damſels are made,
The Guardian muſt force you who cannot perſuade.
That you 'll like a good huſband, I never can doubt;
And married you ſhall be before the month 's out,
Or at leaſt your kind Uncle no more you ſhall teaze,
But may e'en go to Rome and turn Nun if you pleaſe.

SELINA *(aſide.)*

I have loſt all the love he has ſhewn me for years;
If I ſtrive to reply I ſhall burſt into tears.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Come, anſwer me, Miſs! will you ſcribble or not?

Enter the Colonel, Mrs. Felix, *and* Morley.

COLONEL.

My worthy old Friend, what can make you ſo hot?

SIR NICHOLAS.

Ha, Colonel!—you find me a little concern'd—
But I'm heartily glad you are ſafely return'd.
Your arrival indeed is a welcome ſurprize,
Tho' before you your fame a bright harbinger flies;
We have heard your ſucceſs, and we all triumph in it.

COLONEL.

I truſt I am come in a fortunate minute
To make all your preſent embarraſſment ceaſe,
For I bring a young Huſband, my Friend, for your Niece.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Egad that's well ſaid; and I'm ſure it's well meant;
And if he's like you he ſhall have my conſent.

COLONEL.

He has many more virtues, and juſt as much wealth,
And from India brings home both his morals and health.
Here, my Friend, is the Man.—As I owe him my life,
I wiſh to preſent him ſo lovely a Wife;

Half my fortune is his—here I freely declare it,
And have only to hope that Selina may ſhare it.
I've regarded her long as a child of my own;
Nor can my affection more truly be ſhown,
Than by wiſhing to place the dear Girl in the arms
Of the friend whoſe rare virtues are worthy her charms.

MORLEY.

Dear generous Felix, I'm quite overcome,
Thy Bounty is ſuch, it ſtrikes Gratitude dumb!

COLONEL.

This was ever, my Friend, my moſt ſettled intention,
Though my very juſt purpoſe I choſe not to mention,
From the hope I ſhould find, what I gladly embrace,
A moment from which it may borrow ſome grace,
When my gift its plain value may riſe far above,
By the aid it affords to the wiſhes of Love;
And I own, as a prophet I'm proud of my art,
Now I ſee the effects of her charms on your heart.

MORLEY.

O Felix! can I thus deprive thy free ſpirit
Of wealth, the reward of heroical merit?
Can I the victorious Commander deſpoil
Of what he has purchas'd with danger and toil?

Should

Should love and delight on thy preſent attend,
I could never be happy in robbing a Friend.
No, I ſtill muſt decline—

SIR NICHOLAS.

My dear Boy, ſay no more;
You 're the match that I never could meet with before.
I have long ſought in vain for an heir to my mind,
But all my ſoul wiſh'd, in your ſpirit I find.
You ſhall *not* rob your Friend of a ſingle * Gold Moor,
He can raiſe heirs enough to inherit his ſtore:
To ſuch men as himſelf let him haſte to give birth,
And with twenty young Felix's garniſh the earth.
How trifling ſoever your fortune may be,
From the Colonel's eſteem, and the virtues I ſee,
I think you as noble a match for my Niece,
As I could, had you brought home a new golden fleece:
I have money enough, if you 're rich in affection.—
As I always have talk'd of an equal connection,
My neighbours, perhaps, may ſuppoſe my ſight dim,
Or mock my wife choice as a generous whim:

* An Indian Coin.

Let

Let them ſtudy with zeal, which I hope may ſucceed,
Of their horſes and dogs to improve the beſt breed;
A ſtudy more noble engroſſes my mind,
To preſerve the firſt points in the breed of mankind:
On the heart and the ſoul, as the firſt points, I dwell,
In theſe, my dear Children, you match mighty well;
And I think human nature in debt to my care,
For uniting two mortals who happily pair.

COLONEL.

Your hand, my dear Knight, it is glorioufly ſaid!

SIR NICHOLAS.

By Juno we 'll put the young Couple to bed!
We 'll have no dull delays.—

MRS. FELIX.

Now what ſay you, my Dear,
Are theſe orders for marriage too quick and ſevere?

MORLEY.

My amazement and gratitude both are extreme,
But my voice ſeems oppreſt in a heavenly dream;
Though your kindneſs is greater than language can paint,
I beg this fair hand may be free from conſtraint.

SIR

SIR NICHOLAS.

From conſtraint!—Gad, if now ſhe affects to demur,
I can tell her my wrath ſhe will ſo far incur,
She ſhall go to a convent for life, or at leaſt
Be ſent as a venture herſelf to the Eaſt.

SELINA.

My Uncle I long have obey'd, and at preſent
I cannot complain his commands are unpleaſant:
Nay more; could he place all mankind in my view,
And bid me chuſe from them, my choice would be you.

MORLEY.

To this dear declaration my life muſt reply,
All words are too weak—

SIR NICHOLAS.

The whole earth I defy,
To ſhew me a ſcene more delightful than this;
Dear honeſt frank Girl, come and give me a kiſs;
Thou 'rt the creature of Nature much more than of Art,
And I own thee again as the Child of my heart.

JONATHAN, *entering and ſpeaking to the* Colonel.

There are two cheſts for you, Sir, juſt come to the hall.

COLONEL.

A few Indian things for the Ladies—that 's all.
Pray, Jonathan, pay thoſe who brought them with this.
(giving money.)

MORLEY.

My brave lad muſt ſhare in our general bliſs.
Here, Jonathan, if you 're to marriage inclin'd,
And can luckily meet with a girl to your mind,
You may marry and ſettle, as ſoon as you pleaſe;
The Colonel has taken good care of your eaſe.

JONATHAN.

God bleſs him, whate'er he is pleas'd to beſtow!
I think I have found a kind ſweetheart below.

MRS. FELIX.

He has made choice of Jenny;—and I will provide
A fortune, my Friend, for your good-humour'd Bride.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Egad, they ſhall have my new farm on the hill,
And raiſe young recruits there as faſt as they will.

JONATHAN.

Heaven proſper you all! I will pray for you ever,
And to ſerve my King ſtill, as I can, I'll endeavour.
[*Exit.*

SIR NICHOLAS.

Well ſaid, honeſt Soldier;—we'll have no delay,
Go and tell the old Parſon to keep in the way.

COLONEL.

Come with me, fair Couſin, examine my cheſts;
I long to preſent you a few bridal veſts.

MRS. FELIX, *to* Morley.

As we view with delight the events of to-day,
A fair leſſon, my Friend, in your fate we ſurvey;
While, from love to an aged fond parent, with ſpeed
From wealth's open road you moſt kindly recede,
Heaven ſends you that fortune you nobly have ſlighted,
And your warm filial piety here is requited;
This bright moral truth by your lot is expreſt,
"They who ſeek others' bliſs, are by Providence bleſt."

SIR NICHOLAS, *to* Morley.

Here, my worthy young Friend, take and cheriſh this Fair,
And, truſt me, you'll find her deſerving your care;
For although of her ſex ſhe may have a ſmall ſpice,
She'll pleaſe you ten times where ſhe vexes you twice;
And happy the man, in this ſkirmiſhing life,
Who is able to ſay half as much of his Wife.

HAMLET.

Now, my lord, you say true: we must take boot for our horses, if we ride to the king to-night.

HORATIO.

It must be very late before you find him there.

HAMLET.

Not so, I think.

MARCELLUS.

Which way, my lord?

HAMLET.

Over the platform.

MARCELLUS.

Then will I not see you there.

HAMLET.

Why, what will you do?

MARCELLUS.

Keep my watch, though you do think me rash for telling you.

HAMLET.

Would any of the rest of my friends do so too?

HORATIO.

My lord, I will take my oath on it, you cannot be seen.

HAMLET.

Why, what should I be known for? I, who have passed from my youth amongst my friends, and that unblemished, as most are, how stands my virtue, that they will say of me, "There go Hamlet's horses"?

HORATIO.

Well, my lord, if you take offence at what we say, it is our duty to tell you.

HAMLET.

Your love, I take it, is mistaken in me, but I am not easily moved to suspect my friends with dishonour. Let it be tomorrow night, and I will entreat you both, I shall look for you.

HORATIO.

Will you hear me speak?

HAMLET.

I will not hear you speak of this tomorrow.

HORATIO.

Well, my lord.

HAMLET.

Farewell.

MARCELLA;

A TRAGEDY,

OF THREE ACTS.

OF THREE ACTS.

A TRAGEDY.

MACBETH.

PREFACE.

THE following Tragedy may perhaps attract the notice of the curious reader, more by a literary anecdote relating to its ſubject, than by any intrinſic merit as a dramatic compoſition.

The ſtory was recommended to YOUNG by the Author of Clariſſa.—The poet adopted it, and wrote a ſingle act; but this ſhared the fate of his other unfiniſhed manuſcripts, and, according to the direction of his will, was committed to the flames.

Theſe particulars, with a conciſe ſketch of the ſtory as related by RICHARDSON, were communicated to Mr. THORNTON by the poet's very liberal and amiable Son, the neighbour and the much-eſteemed relation of my dear departed friend, who wiſhed me to build a tragedy upon this foundation.

Some particular circumſtances prevented me at that time from executing the deſire of a perſon, who, from the integrity of his judgment, and the uncommon warmth

of

of his friendſhip, had an undiſputed title to influence my ſtudies.—Other works had engaged me, and this dramatic ſtory lay for ſome years neglected: but in looking over the letters of my ſtill-valued, though loſt correſpondent, it ſtruck me with new force. As the diſtreſs, with which it abounds, is of a private nature, it appeared to me ſingularly calculated for my purpoſe of forming a drama for a domeſtic theatre. I have therefore, with ſome conſiderable alterations in the principal incident, raiſed from it a tragedy of three acts; with what ſucceſs, it is now the privilege of my readers to pronounce.

I will not attempt to influence their deciſion by any arguments in its behalf; but let me be allowed to cloſe this ſhort preface with a little poetical acknowledgment to the two literary illuſtrious friends, who firſt marked the ſtory for the tragic Muſe, and from whom it has accidentally deſcended to me.

SONNET.

BLEST Authors! with whoſe fame the world has rung,
Immortal minds, of philanthropic mold!
Pathetic RICHARDSON! ſublimer YOUNG!
To you let me inſcribe the leaves, that hold
A theme,

A theme, ye once conſulted to unfold!
Fairer its fortune, had not death's deſpite
Torn from the ſilenc'd bard this tale half-told!
O could I blend thoſe beams, whoſe ſep'rate light
Forms each a glory round your rival brows,
Sublimity and Pathos! effluence bright
Of higheſt genius!—but in vain ſuch vows:
Yet in the reach of emulation's flight
One eminence ye ſhare:—be that my end!
Teach me to rank with you, as Virtue's friend!

Perſons of the Drama.

GOVERNOR OF BARCELONA,
MENDOZA,
LUPERCIO,
HERNANDEZ,
LOPEZ.

MARCELLA.

Servants, &c.

SCENE *the Governor's Caſtle in* BARCELONA.

MARCELLA.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *The Governor's Caſtle.*

Lupercio *and* Marcella.

MARCELLA.

LET ardent friendſhip be the bond between us,
But O ſubdue this inauſpicious love,
And chace it from thy breaſt!

LUPERCIO.

Impoſſible!
Think, cruel monitor, thro' what long years
My heart has cheriſh'd an encreaſing paſſion,
Till it is grown a portion of my being,
Which I can ne'er relinquiſh but with life!

MARCELLA.

I know, that from our days of infancy
Thy vows have had the ſanction of my father;
And from the period when he firſt became
The governor of this fair city, he
Has lean'd towards thee with an anxious hope
To call thee by the tender name of ſon:
Nor can the world reprove his generous wiſhes,
For Barcelona's walls contain no youth
Of nobler blood, or higher eſtimation.

LUPERCIO.

Lovely encomiaſt! ſure the ſongs of ſeraphs,
And all the wondrous harmonies of Heaven,
Can never ſtrike more ſweetly on the ſoul,
Than the frank praiſe of thoſe angelic lips.

MARCELLA.

I ſhould deſpiſe my own uncandid heart,
If it refus'd that tribute of applauſe
Which ſelfiſh pride, and jealous envy pay
To thy acknowledg'd merit.—Yes! Lupercio,
I own, thy rank, and thy accompliſh'd youth,
Might juſtly challenge a return of fondneſs

From the moſt haughty of our flatter'd ſex;
Yet truſt me, and I ſpeak the words of friendſhip,
'Twere wiſer in thee, even could my tongue
Pronounce the free compliance thou entreateſt,
To turn thy partial eyes from cold Marcella,
And for thy wife ſolicit me no more.

LUPERCIO.

Mock not my ſenſes with ſuch admonition
As reaſon muſt revolt from! Wouldſt thou ſay
To the poor wretch, who after many a ſtep
O'er Afric's burning ſands, half dead with drought,
Holds in his parch'd and eager hand at laſt
The liquid bleſſing, that he long has pin'd for;
Then wouldſt thou ſay, that wiſdom bids him daſh
The ſalutary treaſure from his tongue,
And periſh by the thirſt that waſtes his being?
Such, and more cruel is thy counſel now,
That would induce me to renounce thy charms,
E'en in theſe moments, when thy father's friendſhip
Had fill'd my ſoul with panting expectation
To hear thy heavenly voice declare me happy.

MARCELLA.

MARCELLA.

I know my father's hopes; and by his worth
I ſwear, my heart oft wiſhes for the power
Moſt fondly to fulfil them.

LUPERCIO.

Ha! what bar,
What ſecret bar, from quick-ey'd Love conceal'd,
Has envious fortune rais'd to thwart our union?
You ſay, that you regard me as your friend;
Then honour me with friendſhip's deareſt claim,
Unbounded confidence!—unfold your heart!—
If, to cut off the promiſe of my bliſs,
If there is aught of unknown fondneſs there,
Which fears a father's eye, confide in me!
And though againſt myſelf——

MARCELLA.

Ingenuous youth!
Your mind is noble, but you little know
Marcella's heart, above all low diſguiſe,
Proud of its truth, nor patient of controul.

LUPERCIO.

Pardon the fond ſurmiſe of fearful love!

If

If thy ſoft breaſt is free from predilection,
What other bar?—and yet there may be other;
Nature perhaps has curs'd me with defects
Offenſive to thy ſight; ſome natural blemiſh
Of mind, or feature, which thy delicate ſenſe
Tries to endure, but cannot.

MARCELLA.

No! by Heaven!
Except the noble ſtranger, whom we ſaw
At maſs this morning, and whoſe ſignal graces
Drew from us both obſervance of his perſon,
My eyes ne'er gaz'd upon a comelier youth:
And reaſon tells me, that I ought to love thee:
But my heart ſhrinks perverſely from her voice.
Oft have I try'd to bend my wayward ſpirit
To crown thy conſtant vows, and bleſs my father;
Yet ever as my ſoul purſues that thought,
A ſecret tremor in my boſom bids me
Recoil from thy embraces, whiſpering there,
That I was only born to be thy bane.

LUPERCIO.

Thou! thou my bane!—Thou art my life's ſupport;

As dear, and as eſſential to my being,
As the bleſt radiance of the ſun to nature.
Theſe are the airy fears of virgin ſoftneſs,
Moſt apt to harbour in the lovelieſt minds.
Baniſh the viſionary dread, and give
Thy lighten'd heart to all the joys that court thee!
Thy father's prayers, the vows of all our friends
Will ſhed propitious luſtre on our union:
Hymen can never light his genial flame
With happier auſpices; but were they dark
And hideous as the ſick man's feveriſh dreams;
Wert thou, inſtead of noble Garcia's heireſs,
The child of want, and penury thy dower,
I ſtill ſhould pant as fondly for thy hand;
Still in thy wondrous charms and lovely virtues
Think all the bleſſings of the earth compriz'd.

MARCELLA.

I know thee generous to a fond extreme:
It has ſubdu'd my waywardneſs of temper,
And, ſpite of the reluctance that I feel
To ſpeak the important words, I will be thine.

LUPERCIO.

LUPERCIO.

Bleſt be that ſound! it is an angel's voice,
Freeing the ſpirit of a tortur'd martyr,
And opening to his view the heaven he ſigh'd for.

MARCELLA.

And yet I fear—

LUPERCIO.

Wound not enraptur'd love
With vain diſtruſt! but name the bliſsful day,
When my fond heart—

MARCELLA.

I ſaid, I will be thine:
Do not, with cruel importunity,
Now preſs me farther! As I frankly told thee,
My ſoul, I know not why, is out of tune;
Give me a little time to regulate
The ſtrange emotion of my mind, and try
To meet thee, as I wiſh, without theſe terrors.

LUPERCIO.

Thou dear directreſs of my fate! thy will
Shall ever ſway the conduct of my life,
Howe'er it thwart me.—Yet, I pray thee, name

Some period, on which hope may dwell, to ſooth
The reſtleſs interval! or kindly give me
Some pledge of thy dear promiſe!

MARCELLA.

Take this ring,
Of curious workmanſhip, near Tunis found,
And given my father by a noble Moor;
The wife of Aſdrubal, you know the figure,
Plunging amidſt the flames, in which ſhe periſh'd!
Wear this a month, then claim me as your bride!
But if you value me, preſerve the jewel;
For if you loſe this ſymbol of my faith,
Your negligence may lead me to retract
A promiſe, ſo reluctantly pronounc'd.

LUPERCIO.

Reſt here, thou radiant harbinger of bliſs!
Truſt me, my love, and by thyſelf I ſwear,
That ſooner ſhall my ſoul and body part,
Than this dear gem be wreſted from the finger
Where now it ſhines.—O let me kiſs the hand
Which has enrich'd me with a pledge ſo precious;
And let my lips thus ratify our compact!

(While he is kiſſing her hand,

Enter

Enter the Governor, Hernandez, *and a female Attendant.*

GOVERNOR.

Why, this is well: I like this pleaſing ſhew
Of mutual tenderneſs—She has relented,
And will be your's, Lupercio?

LUPERCIO.

Yes, my father,
I now may call you by that valued title;
My bliſsful doom has paſs'd thoſe lovely lips,
And ſhe is now irrevocably mine.

GOVERNOR.

May every bleſſing my paternal prayers
Can aſk of Heaven, deſcend upon ye both!
Thy free conſent delights me; and thou art
My age's comfort.

MARCELLA.

When I ceaſe to be ſo,
May life forſake me!—'twill have loſt all value.

GOVERNOR.

My tender child, I thank thee: but thou lead'ſt me
Wide of my preſent aim.—With thee, Lupercio,

I muſt on buſineſs of the ſtate awhile,
Hold private converſe: I'll releaſe thee ſoon
To the ſoft object of thy tend'rer thoughts.
Meantime, my daughter, as the hour of veſpers
Now ſummons you, pray for us, and implore
Your Guardian Saint to make your nuptials happy.
Your ſervants wait you—Go!—on your return
You'll find us in the caſtle, and at leiſure
To dedicate the hours to love and joy.—
Now mark me, thou brave youth.

(Retires to the farther part of the ſtage with Lupercio.)

MARCELLA.

Hernandez, you may reſt at home—you know
'Tis not your duty to attend on me,
As I have oft inform'd you.—It is ſtrange
My father ſuffers his old fooliſh ſteward
To peſter me with ſuch officious ſervice.

HERNANDEZ.

Dear lady, do not frown—I have no joy
But to gaze on you, whereſoe'er you go,
And follow like your ſhadow.—Would my ſhape

Were

Were half ſo graceful!—then I think your eyes
Could never view me with an angry glance.

MARCELLA.

Hence, ſaucy vaſſal!—Howſoe'er my father
Uſe thy prepoſterous paſſion for his mirth,
It ſhall not thus inſult me.—Hence! I bid thee
For ever ſhun my preſence.

[*Drops her glove.*

HERNANDEZ *(preſenting the glove.)*

But kind chance
Is more my friend, and makes me ſtill your ſervant.

MARCELLA.

Away! fantaſtic inſolence! be gone!
I will not feed thy vanity, by wearing
Aught which thy touch has ſullied. Iſabel,
Take it, and draw its fellow from my arm!
Bring other gloves, and follow me to veſpers.

[*Exeunt* Marcella *and her Attendant.*

HERNANDEZ.

Inſulting fair! I yet may find a moment
To triumph o'er thy ſcorn.

The

The Governor *and* Lupercio *advance from the end of the ſtage.*

GOVERNOR.

How now, Hernandez!
What! has your miſtreſs chid you from her preſence?
I am indeed to blame, to treat ſo long
Your fooleries with levity and laughter.
Henceforth, in this my young and noble friend
You muſt reſpect a huſband's dignity,
And dare to wound my daughter's ear no more
With ſounds of amorous dotage.

LUPERCIO.

Good Hernandez,
You know the infirmity of Spaniſh huſbands;
And you're ſo ſtudied in your lady's temper,
I may regard you as a dangerous rival.

HERNANDEZ.

I ſtand corrected.—(*Aſide.*) Curſe his happy ſtars!
And curſe his proud and thinly-veil'd contempt!
Howe'er deformity may make my figure
The butt of his deriſion, I've a ſpirit,

In which this fair-limb'd youth may feel a rival
More dangerous than his vanity believes. [*Exit.*

GOVERNOR.

That faithful ſervant is depriv'd of ſenſe
By the abſurdeſt paſſion that e'er triumph'd
O'er manly reaſon: he was juſtly noted
For the beſt qualities that grace his ſtation,
Intelligence and duty, till my daughter
Advanc'd to womanhood; but from that period,
E'en in proportion as her beauties ripen'd,
His faculties have ſeem'd upon the wane.
I have too lightly ſported with his frenzy,
Which call'd for harſher diſcipline.

LUPERCIO.

O! no,
I feel he is entitled to compaſſion;
Marcella has thoſe faſcinating charms,
Which may intoxicate the ſobereſt mind,
Till all its ſenſes reel.—I cannot wonder
Age and deformity forget their nature
By living in her ſight, and only feel
That ſhe has beauty which inflames to madneſs.

GOVERNOR.

GOVERNOR.

She may indeed (with pride the father ſpeaks it)
Be number'd with the loveliеſt of her ſex.
With joy, brave youth, but with an anxious joy,
I give her to thy guard.

LUPERCIO.

Doubt not my love!

GOVERNOR.

Truſt me, I do not: but anxiety
Is the high tax, which fond affection pays
For all its pleaſures; and parental hearts,
As thou may'ſt prove hereafter, pay it double.
Beſides, my daughter, lovely as ſhe is,
Has qualities that claim the niceſt care.

LUPERCIO.

She has a generous pride, which to her ſoul
Gives awful beauty, and proclaims it free
From all that poor and petty artifice,
Which manly arrogance preſumes to think
Inherent in her ſex.

GOVERNOR.

You know, Lupercio,

She

She is the only child that ever nature
Enrich'd me with; my tenderneſs, diſdaining
The rigid cuſtoms of her ſex and country,
Has rear'd her with a freedom little known
To Spaniſh fair-ones; for I wiſh'd to make her,
Not the cag'd vaſſal of parental power,
But truth and nature's chaſte and free diſciple.
Her early temper join'd with my affection
To fix me in this conduct; for, believe me,
Her mind is like the element of fire;
Treat it with gentle caution, it will ſhine
The radiant miniſter of joy and comfort;
But cloſe confinement, or a blind neglect,
May rouſe its perilous energies to ſpread
Unthought-of ſcenes of miſery and terror.

LUPERCIO.

Truſt me, I never will prophane her virtue
With abject jealouſy and harſh conſtraint.

GOVERNOR.

On this nice topic, in our hours of leiſure,
We'll ſpeak more largely, when your juſt affection
Will give kind audience to a father's counſel.

Now other cares demand us.—You forget
The buſineſs I've entruſted to your guidance,
Which calls for quick diſpatch.

LUPERCIO.

Forgive me, Sir!
May love, that miſer, who locks up our thoughts,
Nor lets them circulate, as duty orders,
Plead with me for your pardon!—I am gone. [*Exit.*

GOVERNOR.

My bleſſing be thy guard!—Long have I wiſh'd
To give my daughter to this virtuous youth;
But 'tis the doom of age, in deeds of moment,
To feel the fit of warm deſire ſucceeded
By terror's aguiſh tremblings. I begin
To fear I've preſs'd too far her generous mind,
To what her heart recoils from; for ſhe weds
To indulge a father's wiſhes, not her own.
'Tis true, the tendereſt motives have impell'd me
To urge this union, eager to entruſt
Her peace and honour to a kind protector:
But anxious love, tho' probity may guide it,
Oft, with a fond precipitancy, foils

Its own dear purpoſe, and with dizzy raſhneſs
Leaps in the dreaded gulph it ſtrives to ſhun.—
My child return'd ſo ſoon! and with a ſtranger!
What may this mean?

Enter Marcella *and* Mendoza.

MENDOZA.

It moves, I ſee, thy wonder,
Thou honour'd veteran, that thus uncheck'd
By ceremony's juſt obſervances,
A youth unknown intrudes upon thy preſence,
And dares to make this lovely maid his herald.

GOVERNOR.

Whoe'er thou art, young Signor, I muſt own
Thy graceful ſemblance prompts me to believe
Thou haſt no common claim to courteſy.

MENDOZA.

'Tis poſſible thou art not unacquainted
With young Mendoza's name.

GOVERNOR.

Who knows it not?
Spain has no martial ſon, whoſe generous veins
Hold richer blood; and fame reports Mendoza

A youth, whoſe opening virtues have reflected
New honour on his noble anceſtry.
Our country, with a fond, impatient pride,
Expects him from his travels; but 'tis ſaid
That, grac'd with a diſcerning monarch's friendſhip,
He purpoſes to paſs another year
At the Imperial court.

MENDOZA.

Such as he is,
Mendoza ſtands before thee, and thou ſeeſt him
An anxious, humble ſuitor to thy bounty.

GOVERNOR.

To me, my Lord!

MENDOZA.

To thee, thou happy father!
To thee, thou bleſt poſſeſſor of a treaſure,
That turns all other wealth to poverty!
Oft had I heard thy lovely daughter praiſ'd
As beauty's ſtandard, and no more allowing
A competition with inferior fair-ones,
Than the rich diamond's blaze admits compare
With the dark amethyſt, or clouded opal.

It

It was my wiſh, in paſſing thro' your city,
Unknown to gaze upon this beauteous wonder,
As on a prodigy of nature's work,
Supreme in lovelineſs ; which to have ſeen,
Gives to the eye that ſaw it a proud ſparkle
Of exultation, whenſoe'er 'tis nam'd.

GOVERNOR.

This laviſh praiſe, my Lord, at once o'erwhelms me
With joy and pain ; and both in the extreme.
Pray do not ſpoil, by thus o'er-rating them,
The ſimple charms of an unpoliſh'd girl!

MENDOZA.

Your pardon!—'tis not in the power of language
To ſtate their excellence.—At maſs this morning
My eager eyes firſt feaſted on their ſight :
I thought I ne'er had ſeen till that bleſt moment ;
For on my raviſh'd ſenſe her beauty burſt,
Dazzling and dear, as new-imparted light
To one, whoſe viſual organs from his childhood
Had pin'd in moping darkneſs—from that hour
My heart cries loudly, that the earth contains
No prize worth my contention, but her love.—

Report inform'd me, that her ſoft affections
Are yet unfix'd; tho' an accompliſh'd youth,
Fondly preſuming on a father's friendſhip,
Hopes hourly for the promiſe of her hand.
Fir'd by theſe tidings, as again I ſaw her
Approach the hallow'd precincts of the temple,
I threw me at her feet, conjur'd her pity
To guide me to your preſence, and implor'd
The Guardian Saint, whoſe votary I ſued to,
That when we next that ſacred pavement trod,
Heaven might exalt me to the bliſsful honour
To lead her to the altar.

MARCELLA.

Oft in vain
I pray'd the gallant ſtranger to forbear
His unavailing ſuit, nor vex my father
With fruitleſs importunity.

MENDOZA.

To both
I bend for pardon, that my violent love
Dar'd to o'er-rule the mortifying counſel
Of maidenly reſerve, and modeſt fear.

If yet thy heart, that throne of happineſs,
Be vacant, I implore thy father's leave
To join the conteſt for a prize, whoſe value
Might tempt the monarchs of the world in arms
To hazard each his empire.

GOVERNOR.

Noble youth!
Thy generous warmth ſo wins on my eſteem,
I will entruſt thy own ingenuous heart
To judge the cauſe, where e'en thy love's a party.
The hour's not paſt, in which, with her aſſent,
I gave my daughter to a valiant friend,
Who long has lov'd her; tho' I frankly own
His birth and fortune make him not thy equal.
Such is my ſtory: now aſſume my place,
And anſwer for me! Say! ſhall I, a ſoldier,
An old plain ſoldier, honeſty my pride!
Shall I revoke my promiſe, at the lure
Of intereſt and ambition?

MENDOZA.

Thou haſt found
The way to vanquiſh all Mendoza's ardour:

Thy words benumb my ſoul; but thou ſhalt ſee
My wounded heart has virtue to decide
Againſt itſelf. Mendoza's voice ſhall never
Prompt to the lips of honourable age
The abject ſounds of infamy.—Shalt thou
Revoke thy promiſe! no! thou brave old man,
Not tho' my life ſhould end by its completion!
Let the vain ſons of Italy and France
Attempt, by mental alchemy, to turn
The lead of falſhood into wiſdom's gold,
And ſink, their own poor bubbles, in the trial!
It is the glory of a true Caſtilian
To ſcorn ſuch arts, and hold his word once given
As ſacred as the fiat of a God.

GOVERNOR.

There ſpoke the ſpirit of Caſtilian honour.
Brave youth! I yet will love thee as my ſon,
Tho' fate forbid ſuch union.—Let us hence,
It may amuſe thy generous mind to ſhew thee
The precincts of our caſtle.

MENDOZA.

Well thou warneſt

Thy

Thy giddy gueſt to fly a dangerous banquet,
Where his warm ſoul drinks poiſon.—Matchleſs fair-one!
I muſt perforce from thy enchanting preſence
Tear my reluctant heart, while yet I can;
Before the firm reſolve of honour melts
In that full blaze of frenzy-kindling beauty.
I go:—Still, ere I quit theſe walls for ever,
I ſhall implore one parting interview;
But for a few ſhort moments, but to utter
My ardent vows, that Heaven may make thee happy;
And to entreat, that as the years roll on,
And bring thee, as I hope they will, new bleſſings,
Thou'lt deign, at leaſt on this revolving day,
To think not harſhly of my hapleſs paſſion,
And give one ſigh of pity to Mendoza.

[*Exit, with the* Governor.

MARCELLA.

He's gone, ere my full heart allow'd me power
To frame one grateful accent to the man,
For whom alone my unconſtrained lips
Could utter vows of genuine tenderneſs.
Enchanting youth!—Doſt thou implore my pity?

Thou canſt not need compaſſion: love and joy
Will, as thy guardian ſpirits, hover round thee.
I am the wretch, whoſe lacerated mind
Cries out for pity, which I do not merit.
Fool that I was! by a reluctant promiſe
To violate the heart's prerogative!
This injur'd ſovereign now awakes to vengeance,
And I deſerve theſe tortures.—O Lupercio!
Thou wert before an object, from whoſe touch
My conſcious frame recoil'd.—What art thou now?
Thy very name is diſcord in my ear,
That agitates my wounded brain to frenzy.
And ſhall I wed thee? take thee to my boſom?
An aſpic ſooner! from whoſe dearer claſp
My miſeries might hope for welcome death!
Yet how eſcape thee, and maintain at once
My father's honour and my own unſhaken?
O for ſome kind aſſiſtant! whoſe invention
May o'er my darken'd thoughts diffuſe one glimpſe
Of cheering light!—Here comes a miniſter
Who wants not will to ſerve me.

Enter

Enter Hernandez.

HERNANDEZ.

Haſte, dear lady;
Your father aſks a moment's parley with you
In private, and before he walks abroad
To ſhow our ramparts to a noble ſtranger.

MARCELLA.

Canſt thou, Hernandez, baniſh from thy memory
All my paſt anger, and exert thy powers
To gain my favor by one ſignal ſervice?

HERNANDEZ.

Aſk me if I exiſt; for while I live,
I hold my life devoted to your pleaſure.

MARCELLA.

I'll put thee to the trial, for the taſk
Allows not e'en a moment of delay.
Know then, I fooliſhly have given Lupercio
My ring, the pledge of an unguarded promiſe,
Which my wrong'd heart forbids me to fulfil.
I warn'd him, if he chanc'd to loſe the jewel,
Our compact ſhould be void.—If thou'lt deviſe

Some lucky artifice to lure it from him,
Thou ſhalt have thrice the value of the gem.

HERNANDEZ.

Wouldſt thou elude thy nuptials with Lupercio?
The bleſt intelligence revives my ſoul!

MARCELLA.

He is the hated bar, on whoſe removal
My heart might enter paradiſe, and follow
The dear ſuggeſtions of unfetter'd love.

HERNANDEZ.

Enough! thou ſhalt be miſtreſs of thyſelf.

MARCELLA.

Make me but that——My father calls——but that,
And I'll reward thee, till thyſelf ſhalt own
My gratitude a prodigal in bounty.
Loſe not a moment——ſet me free to-night,
And thro' my every hour of future life
I'll bleſs thee for the ſervice. [*Exit.*

HERNANDEZ.

Then to-night
Shall rid thee of Lupercio.—Thou ſhalt feel,
Sarcaſtic boy! I am a dangerous rival.

I know

I know in what lone quarter of the ramparts
Nightly thou walk'ſt in amorous contemplation,
Murmuring fantaſtic crotchets to the moon:
There if I miſs thee, ſtill the blended fires
Of love and of revenge ſhall aid my ſearch,
And guide my thirſty poniard to thy heart.

End of ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE. I.

MARCELLA *(alone.)*

THE night is paſt, but the all-cheering morn
Fails to diſpel the darkneſs of my ſoul:
My reſtleſs heart yet beats with blended throbs
Of anguiſh and delight, at the idea
That theſe fond eyes may, with my father's leave,
Gaze once again upon the dear Mendoza.

O might

O might they in our parting cloſe for ever!—
'Tis ſtrange I yet hear nothing of Hernandez.
But what can he?—I was indeed an idiot
To think his paltry aid could terminate
My miſeries; I might as well believe
That the poor current of a ſcanty brook
Might quench the conflagration of the globe.
O would thoſe final flames, that will conſume
This gloomy world, this ſtage of wretchedneſs,
Were kindling now! for my deliver'd ſoul,
Eſcaping from worſe horrors, could rejoice
In that dread ſcene of fiery deſolation,
And think it bliſs to periſh with Mendoza.

MENDOZA *(entering.)*

"And think it bliſs to periſh with Mendoza!"
Extatic ſounds! may I believe my ſenſe!
Have I ſuch tender intereſt in that boſom?

MARCELLA.

'Tis not well done, my lord, thus at the dawn
To ſteal upon my privacy, and rob
A wounded ſpirit of its ſole ſupport;
The ſecrecy of woes beyond a cure.

MENDOZA.

MENDOZA.

Pardon the impatient ſpeed of anxious paſſion!
I have nor reſt, nor joy, but in thy preſence,
And haſten'd to thee, in the ſad belief,
(A burthen which my heart would now throw off)
That this dear interview muſt prove the laſt.

MARCELLA.

The laſt indeed it muſt be!

MENDOZA.

If thy voice
Can ſpeak with ſuch ſweet kindneſs of Mendoza,
Thou wilt revoke that ſentence; and what power
Shall burſt the hallow'd ties of mutual love,
And tear our wedded ſpirits from each other?

MARCELLA.

The ruler of thy life, imperious Honour!
Honour, who has already by thy voice
Pronounc'd the firm immutable decree,
That this ill-fated hand muſt not be thine.

MENDOZA.

Urge not againſt me the confus'd deciſion
Of ignorance and blind miſtaken pride!

When I confirm'd thy father in his purpoſe,
I knew not, that to keep his fatal word
He muſt become a tyrant to thy heart,
And violate the deareſt rights of nature!
I knew not that Mendoza's ardent love
Had in thy boſom rais'd the bleſt emotion
Of tender ſympathy.

MARCELLA.

O that my heart
Had not unwarily betray'd its weakneſs!
Then might a juſt ingenuous pride have taught me
To bear the painful ſecret to my grave.

MENDOZA.

Unkindly ſaid!—If ſuch could be thy wiſh,
Thou haſt not lov'd Mendoza.

MARCELLA.

Think ſo ever!
I have not lov'd him; duty, faith, forbid it:
I am affianc'd to a generous youth,
Who claims the full dominion of my heart;
Nor ſhall Mendoza's image lurk within it,
To prove the aſſaſſin of my peace and honour.

MENDOZA.

MENDOZA.

O lovely haughtineſs of mind! this conflict,
This agitation of thy artleſs boſom,
Proves the enchanting truth, I am belov'd:
I read it in thoſe ſweetly-ſpeaking eyes,
Where the faint ſpark of anger is extinguiſh'd
In melting tenderneſs. While thus I claſp thee,
Kind ſympathy gives to thy every nerve
Delicious ſoftneſs; and thy ſwelling heart
Vibrates in uniſon with mine, to form
Th' extatic harmony of mutual love.—
Thou weep'ſt!—O Heaven! I feel theſe precious drops
Fall on my wounded breaſt, like liquid fire.
O, I had rather draw upon my head
The worſt of human ills, thy hate and ſcorn!
Rather than touch thee with an ill-ſtarr'd paſſion,
If it muſt prove a ſource of ſorrow to thee,
And quench the radiance of thine eyes in tears.

MARCELLA.

I can believe thee, for thy noble ſoul
Is honour's ſanctuary.—Then, as my friend,
Let me implore the firmneſs of thy ſpirit

To aid the treacherous failing of my own!
I am indeed unpractis'd in the arts
My ſex is fam'd for; I have not the ſkill
To hide th' emotions of a feeling heart:
And I will lay it open to thy view.
I will avow, that if my wayward fortune
Had not forbid the union of our hands,
I would have met the ardour of thy vows
With all the frankneſs of ſimplicity,
Proud of its pleaſing lot. I would have pray'd
For undecaying charms to keep thy love,
Bleſſing the God who form'd us for each other.
But ſince the bar——

MENDOZA.

There is, there ſhall be none:
We'll urge thy heart's unalienable right
To be the ſole diſpoſer of thy beauty.

MARCELLA.

O ſpeak not thus!—my own unbalanc'd mind,
Whirl'd in the eddies of tempeſtuous thought,
Already has been hurried much too far
From the ſafe courſe integrity preſcribes.

But

But the remembrance of thy bright example
Shall be my glorious guide, and ſtill preſerve me.
How nobly haſt thou ſaid, thou wouldſt not urge
My honour'd father to revoke his promiſe,
Not if thy life ſhould end by its completion!
Shalt thou, a ſtranger! thus againſt thyſelf
Stand forth the firm aſſerter of his honour,
And ſhall his child betray it?

MENDOZA.

Do not wound
Thy own pure ſpirit by this groundleſs ſcruple!

MARCELLA.

It is conviction, founded on the laws,
Th' unqueſtionable laws of faith and virtue.
I muſt for ever fly thee, or diſgrace
My father and myſelf. And ſhall I heap
Grief, diſappointment, miſery, and ſhame
Upon my father's head? And what a father!
Rough as he is in the rude ſcene of arms,
The ſterneſt ſoldier of his time, to me
The awful thunder of his voice has ſoften'd
E'en to the tender ſweetneſs of a lute.

With me he has for ever thrown aſide
All the aſperities of harſh command,
And diſciplin'd my wayward infancy
With all the mildneſs of a mother's love.

MENDOZA.

O might I aid thee in thy deareſt office,
To pay him back thoſe long and large arrears
Of tenderneſs and care!—Yes! we will make it
The inceſſant ſtudy of our days to lighten
Whatever load encroaching age lays on him;
And by the ſweet ſolicitude extend
The limit of his bleſt and honour'd life.

MARCELLA.

Could it be ſuch, our lot indeed were happy;
But 'tis impoſſible. Should I, forgetting
The ſanctity of promiſes, ſhould I
Attempt to burſt the fetters that involve me,
And ſtruggle to be your's, it could not be:
Kind as he is, my father's firmer ſpirit
In points of honour is inflexible!
Could I myſelf deſcend—and wounded pride
Revolts at the idea—could I ſtoop

To beg, that he would countenance my falſhood,
I know his anſwer.—" Would'ſt thou," he would cry,
" Make me an object of the world's contempt?
Shall I be cenſur'd as a ſordid wretch,
Who, having given my daughter to a friend,
Cheated his hopes, and ſold her venal beauty
To the rich ſplendor of Mendoza's fortune?"'

MENDOZA.

Periſh the envious ſpirits, who could harbour
So baſe a thought of him who gave thee being!
But ſhould he be reproach'd, (as pureſt virtue,
And the beneficence of Heaven itſelf,
'Scapes not ſuch prophanation) it were better,
Than to behold thy peace of mind deſtroy'd,
And thy ſoft heart corroded by the ſhackles,
The galling ſhackles of a joyleſs marriage.—
Think what it is to preſs the nuptial couch,
When, for the roſes Love ſhould ſcatter there,
The fiend Antipathy has form'd its pillow
Of ſharpeſt thorns, that lacerate the brain!

MARCELLA.

I know it muſt be agony far worſe

Than

Than death's ſevereſt pang: the thought already
Has thrown my troubled mind from off its balance,
And plung'd me in diſtraction.—Thou art cruel,
To ſet my woes thus forcibly before me,
And aggravate the anguiſh of my fate.

MENDOZA.

Think rather, that with fond anxiety
I warn you of the precipice you tread,
And pant to ſave you trembling on its brink.

MARCELLA.

I pray you leave me, for your dangerous aid
Can but encreaſe the horrors of my fall.
O leave me, I conjure you!

MENDOZA.

Once aſſure me,
You will endeavour to draw back your hand
From this abhorr'd alliance, I will reſt
On the faint hope which may ariſe from thence.

MARCELLA.

Whatever I can do, and not deſtroy
My father's peace and honour, ſhall be done;
For O, 'tis certain, rather than be dragg'd

The victim of Lupercio's nuptial triumph,
My heart would chuſe to languiſh life away
In the lone walls of ſome ſequeſter'd cell,
Where not one pleaſing ſound could ſooth my ſuffering,
Save when I clos'd ſome melancholy prayer
With the dear echo of Mendoza's name.

MENDOZA.

Enchanting ſoftneſs! thou ſhalt yet be mine,
And theſe heart-rending ſighs ſhall turn to rapture.

MARCELLA.

I hear my father's ſtep; depart, I pray thee!

MENDOZA.

By Heaven, my feet ſeem rooted to this ſpot,
And have not power to bear me from thy preſence!

Enter the Governor.

GOVERNOR.

Ah, my young friend! youth wants a monitor
To bid it mark the rapid flight of time.
Is this your momentary interview?
Come! force me not to play the teſty father,
And chide you from my roof!

MENDOZA.

MENDOZA.

O pardon me,
I will but ſeal one vow of tender friendſhip
On this fair hand, and inſtantly attend you.—
Farewell!—Thou art the loveliеſt work of Heaven,
And may its pureſt ſpirits be thy guard!

[*Exit, with the* Governor.

MARCELLA.

Torn from me! baniſh'd from my view for ever!
O, ſhall theſe wretched eyes behold no more
The darling of their ſight! and as each morn
Of hated life returns, ſhall they be forc'd
To gaze upon the object that they loath?
Sure all the ſubtleſt of the infernal fiends
Are leagu'd to curſe me with their keeneſt tortures.
Ah, ſenſeleſs wretch! my folly is the fiend
From whom this miſery ſprings: 'twas I, 'twas I,
Slave that I was! who faſten'd on myſelf
This iron bondage that corrodes my ſoul.

HERNANDEZ *(entering.)*

Lament its weight no more! thy chain is broken.
Receive the ſymbol of thy liberty! [*Delivering the ring.*

MARCELLA.

It is my ring! my gladden'd eyes acknowledge
Its bright aſſurance of recover'd freedom!—
Fly, ſtop Mendoza!—Stay! yet tell me firſt
How thou haſt proſper'd, thou excelling ſervant!—
Thou ſhalt have great rewards, great as my joy!—
How did the fond Lupercio yield my pledge?
Haſte! tell me all—I muſt prepare myſelf
To meet him ſoon, complaining of his loſs.

HERNANDEZ.

Be ſatisfied!—He can no more complain.

MARCELLA.

What doſt thou mean by that myſterious accent?

HERNANDEZ.

His hated voice ſhall ne'er be heard again.

MARCELLA.

Thou haſt not murder'd him!—By Heaven thou haſt;
I read it in thy dark and troubled viſage.

HERNANDEZ.

I have indeed been bloody for thy ſake.

MARCELLA.

Is he then butcher'd by thy ſavage hand?——

Unhappy youth! thy pale and gory ſpectre
Will glare for ever in my ſight, and baniſh
All hopes of quiet from my ſoul for ever.—
Wretch! thou haſt ſunk me in the deepeſt gulph
Of horror and perdition.

HERNANDEZ.

Come, be chear'd!
I have deliver'd thee from him, whoſe being
Was torture to thy heart.—Lupercio's dead;
And by my caution it muſt be ſuppos'd
The nightly robbers, who infeſt our city,
Have thus reveng'd his vigilance againſt them.

MARCELLA.

Is this the recompence of all thy merit,
Brave, gen'rous, frank Lupercio?—Tho' my heart
Recoil'd perverſely from thy love, it feels,
With cold convulſive pangs of vain regret,
It feels thy worth, thy ill-requited virtues,
And all the horrors of thy barb'rous fate.

HERNANDEZ.

Reflect thou only from what hated ſcenes
Of hopeleſs pain my daring hand has ſav'd thee!

Think what thou ow'ſt to me, who for thy ſake
Have put in hazard my immortal ſoul!

MARCELLA.

Ill-fated wretch! thou alſo haſt my pity.
'Twas my baſe conduct, blinded as I was,
That plung'd thee in this guilt.—But haſte! be gone!
Fly! while thou canſt, where juſtice may not find thee.
Fly to ſome diſtant climate; and endeavour,
By penitence, to make thy peace with Heaven!
Go where thou wilt, my bounty ſhall attend thee,
And aid thee with ſuch laviſh ſums of gold,
As may enable thee, by thoſe good deeds
Which charity delights in, beſt to cancel
Or counterpoiſe the evil of thy crime.

HERNANDEZ.

What! canſt thou vainly think, that in thy ſervice
I've dy'd my unſtain'd hand in guiltleſs blood
For gold! the needy robber's paltry prey?

MARCELLA.

What was thy aim?—thy frantic eyes affright me!

HERNANDEZ.

Here is the nobler recompence I claim,

Thy beauty! rich in medicinal balm
To heal th' envenom'd anguiſh of remorſe.
Come to my breaſt! and with thy melting charms
Drown all the keeneſt pangs, that guilt can waken,
In extacy more poignant!

MARCELLA.

Slave! unhand me!—
Away! remember, raſh, preſumptuous villain!
The diſtance of thy ſtation!

HERNANDEZ.

Idle pride!
Silence its frivolous and falſe ſuggeſtion!
The hours juſt paſt have plac'd us on a level.
Thou haſt no title now, but Murdereſs.
We are confederates in guilt and blood:
Blood is the cement of our equal union.

MARCELLA.

Thou dar'ſt not ſay it.

HERNANDEZ.

Dive into thy boſom!
Aſk thy own heart!—Didſt thou not wiſh his death?
Aye! had thy flaming eyes, like baſiliſks,

Been

Been arm'd with ſudden power to ſtrike him dead,
Their ſtroke had far outſtripp'd my tardy dagger.
Thou couldſt not think thy lover would reſign
The gem, thou bad'ſt me pilfer, but with life.

MARCELLA.

No! witneſs Heaven! I thought not of his death.—
Yet thou haſt rent a veil of fatal paſſion,
That hid my own ſoul from me; and I ſee
The ſtains of miſery and guilt are on it.
I am indeed the ſource, the wretched ſource
Of all this ſcene of horror: 'tis to me,
To me, thou ill-ſtarr'd miniſter of miſchief,
Thou ow'ſt the burden of this bloody deed,
Which cries to angry Heaven for retribution.—
Now, I conjure thee, raiſe again thy arm!
Plunge thy yet-reeking poniard in my heart,
And by this juſtice expiate our crimes!

HERNANDEZ.

Away with vain remorſe!—Come! let me ſteep
Thy troubled ſenſes in thoſe ſoft delights,
That ſweetly ſteal from the enchanted ſoul
All memory of pain!

MARCELLA.

MARCELLA.

Delight from thee!

HERNANDEZ.

I find, contemptuous fair-one! I am not
Thy fav'rite! No! thy nice faſtidious eye
Delights in daintier forms. My jealous paſſion
Has caught thy boſom's ſecret.—Yet be grateful,
Be wiſe! and I will make thee ſoon the bride
Of thy belov'd Mendoza.

MARCELLA.

Canſt thou mean it?

HERNANDEZ.

Yes! with this fine-form'd heir of wealth and grandeur,
Soon ſhalt thou ſhine in all that blaze of fortune
Which ſuits thy towering ſpirit, if thy beauties
Will pay their debt of gratitude to me,
And with thoſe ſweet delights, that ſtealth makes ſweeter,
Reward the ſecret author of thy greatneſs.

MARCELLA.

What! be the wife of Honour's nobleſt ſon,
And live the ſervile ſtrumpet of my vaſſal!—
Preſumptuous villainy!—Unhand me, ruffian!

HERNANDEZ.

HERNANDEZ.

Nay! ſtruggle not!—I have thee in my toils,
And my keen love ſhall feaſt upon its victim,
O'ertaken with ſuch hazard.—Come! be gentler!

MARCELLA.

Never! O never!

HERNANDEZ.

Muſt I owe to force
The joy thy pitying gratitude ſhould give?
The joy for which my ardent ſoul has thirſted,
E'en to its own perdition?

MARCELLA.

Hence! away!—
Releaſe my hand, or my diſtracted cries
Shall bring my injur'd father to my aid.

HERNANDEZ.

And dar'ſt thou threaten me, ungrateful girl?
But it ſhall not avail thee.—Hear, and tremble
At the ſuperior threat thou mak'ſt me utter!—
Thou ſee'ſt, by all the bloody buſineſs paſt,
I hold my life as nothing: if thou ſtill
Deny'ſt me, what I have ſo dearly purchas'd,

I will,

I will, before our magiſtrates I will
Avow the murder, charge upon thy head
The black deſign, and add, I have receiv'd
Thy virgin treaſure as my ſettled hire;
But that remorſe has drawn the ſecret from me.—
Now learn to threaten, girl!—Now take thy choice!
Shame! public ſhame, with tortures and with death,
Or the ſafe ſweets of privacy and joy!

MARCELLA.

Amazement! thy ferocity in guilt
O'erwhelms my faculties.—Yet hear me, Heaven!
To thee, altho' offended by my falſhood,
To thee I kneel: O puniſh my offences
By any pangs thy juſtice may ordain,
But ſave! O ſave me from this daring wretch!

HERNANDEZ.

Thy prayer's too late, ſince thou haſt render'd me
The wretch I am: thy paſſions made me guilty,
And thou ſhalt yield me that reward of guilt
For which I burn in every vein to madneſs!—
Come, my reluctant fair-one!

MARCELLA.

MARCELLA.

No! by Heaven!
Fulfil thy horrid, thy inhuman threats!
Add perjury to murder! and devote me
To infamy and death!—I will embrace them,
Rather than yield to thy abhorr'd ſuggeſtion,
And in that fellowſhip debaſe my ſoul.

HERNANDEZ.

Is there ſuch firmneſs in the heart of woman?
Then artifice aſſiſt me! (*Aſide.*)——Matchleſs virtue!
E'en in this frenzy of my tortur'd ſpirit
I feel thy awful power!—Thy purity
Irradiates the dark chaos of my mind,
And all the warring fires of lawleſs paſſion
Turn at thy voice to penitential tears!——
I kneel to thee for pardon.

MARCELLA.

Bend to Heaven!
'Tis Heaven who ſtrikes thee, to reclaim thy ſoul,
With juſt compunction.

HERNANDEZ.

Thou benignant angel!

On thee depends my ſafety or perdition;
Treat me with ſoothing pity and forgiveneſs,
And I may yet atone for all my crimes,
The fatal offspring of diſtracted paſſion!

MARCELLA.

Thou haſt my pity.

HERNANDEZ.

I will aſk no more;
I will not wound thy dignity, by wiſhing
What madneſs only led my heart to ſigh for.
No! fair Perfection! live thou many years
In the chaſte bliſs of honourable love!
While I, the victim of a frantic fondneſs,
In ſome wild deſert hide my loath'd exiſtence,
Mourn my paſt guilt, and hope the pitying vows
Of innocence like thine, may draw from Heaven
A full, tho' late forgiveneſs of my crimes.

MARCELLA.

Unhappy ſervant! in my prayers for mercy
Thou ne'er ſhalt be forgotten.

HERNANDEZ.

'Tis my purpoſe

To

To fly from hence before to-morrow's dawn:
But wherefore? I nor wiſh, nor merit life.—
Haſte to thy injur'd father! let him know
The wretch he harbours! and for all my guilt
Let public juſtice make her full atonement!

MARCELLA.

Poor frantic criminal! yet hope in Heaven!
I, who have blindly led thee into crimes,
Will not accelerate thy puniſhment.
Seek ſome religious cell, and meditate
On the infinitude of heavenly mercy!

HERNANDEZ.

I ſee, I feel it in thy ſoothing pity!

MARCELLA.

Here meet me once again, ſome two hours hence;
I will ſupply thee with ſuch gold or jewels
As may give comfort to thy lengthen'd days.

HERNANDEZ.

Thou art too good, too tender to a villain,
Who has deſerv'd thy hatred and thy ſcorn.—
Still let me ſtrive to ſhew I have a heart
That knows to value what it cannot merit.

I will not meet thee. We'll converſe no more,
Leſt when my flight is known, ſome dark ſuſpicion
Fall on thy innocence.—At evening's cloſe
Leave thou the gift, thy charity intends,
In the lone tower, that flanks the garden wall.
At midnight I will take thy bounty thence,
And, praying for thy peace, depart for ever.

MARCELLA.

I thank thy generous caution; nor will fail
To bring thee liberal aid: for ſtill, I truſt,
'Tis Heaven's intent, for all thy earlier virtues,
By years of calm ſequeſter'd penitence
To purify thy ſoul, and ſeal thy pardon.
Cheriſh that thought! and Mercy be thy guard! [*Exit.*

HERNANDEZ *(alone.)*

'Tis well—Proud Beauty! I am now thy maſter:
Thy haughty ſpirit, that no threats could tame,
Sinks unſuſpecting in the ſmooth deception
That artifice has ſpread.—In that lone tower,
Where the coy clamours of a feign'd averſion
Will only prove a prelude to my joy,

I'll lurk to ſeize thy charms.—Now haſten, Night!
Thy kind companions, Solitude and Darkneſs,
Shall o'er this froward fair-one aid my triumph,
And ſate inſulted love with ſweet revenge.

End of ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

HERNANDEZ *(alone.)*

VICTORIOUS paſſion! thou at length haſt gain'd
The prize, that long has kindled in my ſoul
Such wild tumultuous hopes and madding wiſhes!
Thy ſecret joys are ſafe.—Spite of the frenzy,
Rais'd by her wounded pride and vain reſiſtance,
This coy one, ſtifling her vindictive rage,
Moſt wiſely hides the myſteries of the night;

And

And from her ſilence in this haſty marriage,
My triumph is complete: ſhe now will grow
The willing vaſſal of my private pleaſure.
But hark! I hear the doating bridegroom's voice:
He moves this way.—I would not he ſhould caſt
His keen eyes on me, till my harraſs'd ſpirit
Regain its wonted firmneſs.—I'll avoid him. [*Exit.*

Enter the Governor *and* Mendoza.

GOVERNOR.

Indeed, my ſon, I've yielded much too far
To the fond zeal of your intemperate love.
How will the world upbraid me, for allowing
Your hurried nuptials, in this ill-ſtarr'd hour
Of doubtful horrors, your unhappy bride
Or drown'd in tears, or almoſt craz'd with terror!
And the brave youth, her late affianc'd lord,
My poor ill-fated friend, welt'ring in blood,
From the baſe wounds of undetected murder!

MENDOZA.

My honour'd father, thou haſt only done
What tenderneſs and duty both enjoin'd.

Her

Her generous wiſh to be my wedded love,
Her virtuous dread that honour might forbid it,
And the dire fate of that lamented youth,
Whom ſhe both loath'd and pitied, all combin'd,
Had cruelly depriv'd her troubled ſenſes
Of reaſon's ſovereign guidance; ſtill on me
The lovely maniac rav'd; implor'd my aid
To ſave her from Lupercio's nuptial claim,
And chaſe the gory phantom from her ſight,
Which frenzy rais'd before it:—what remain'd,
But for Mendoza, urg'd by love and pity,
To take the dear diſtreſt one to his boſom,
Bear her from hence, and in more tranquil ſcenes
Heal her diſtemper'd mind, and fondly cheriſh
The gentle ſufferer into peace and joy?

GOVERNOR.

Heaven bleſs the generous fervor of thy fondneſs,
Thou noble-minded youth!—I had not power
To thwart thy wiſh, tho' my paternal heart,
Trembling in its completion, ſtill endures
Painful viciſſitudes of hope and fear.

MENDOZA.

Doubt not, my father, lenient time and love,
That mutual love which consecrates our union,
Will from the harrass'd spirit of thy daughter
Remove this load of complicated anguish,
And make us soon the happiest pair that ever
Reach'd the pure summit of connubial bliss.

GOVERNOR.

I know she loves thee to a fond excess;
Her soul was form'd for love: and thou art blest,
Most richly blest, with all that can enchant
The eye or heart of woman:—on this ground
I build my strongest hope. Yet O, my son,
Weak as she is, her senses scarce restor'd,
How can I yield this darling from my sight,
E'en to a guard so tender?

MENDOZA.

Speak your pleasure!
If 'tis your wish, we will remain your guests.
But change of place will sooth the harrass'd mind
Of our sweet sufferer. She should quit this scene,

While,

While, in avenging the brave murder'd youth,
You nobly pay your great and awful debt
To private friendſhip and to public juſtice.

GOVERNOR.

I have no doubts on that atrocious deed.—
My poor loſt friend's incautious ardent ſpirit
Had fatally provok'd ſome deſperate villains
Who lurk within our city: the baſe wretches
Have thus reveng'd a menace, which Lupercio
Pronounc'd againſt their chief;—but by my orders
We ſoon ſhall ſee the bloody ſlaves ſecur'd.
A care ſtill heavier preſſes on my heart,
My poor perturbed child!—My anxious love
Wavers in painful doubt, nor can reſolve
To ſpeed her hence, or to detain her here.

MENDOZA.

Submit it to her choice!—Soon as the prieſt
Ended our haſty and affecting marriage,
You know ſhe begg'd permiſſion to retire,
To gain by ſolitude reviving ſtrength,
And ſtill thoſe throbs of lovely agitation,
Which in the ſolemn rite ſubdu'd her ſoftneſs.

Go to her chamber, your paternal care
May beſt explore her wiſhes: let them be
Our guides in every ſtep!—For me, I hold
My fortune and my life but miniſters
Bound to fulfil our deareſt mutual hope,
And make the bliſs of your angelic daughter
As perfect as her beauty.

GOVERNOR.

Noble youth!
A father's tears muſt thank thee.—I will follow
Thy generous counſel, and return to bleſs thee. [*Exit.*

MENDOZA.

How mighty is thy power, Parental Love!
The hardy ſinews of this gallant veteran,
Proof 'gainſt the weight of war's ſevereſt toils,
Yield to thy preſſure.—That undaunted firmneſs,
Which peril could not ſhake, is turn'd by thee
To wavering fear and fond irreſolution.

Enter Lopez.

LOPEZ.

My honour'd lord, forgive me, if my zeal
Urge me to trouble you with painful truths!

MENDOZA.

MENDOZA.

What wouldſt thou, Lopez?—Hence with idle preface,
And ſpeak thy meaning boldly!

LOPEZ.

'Tis my duty
That forces from my lips, at ſuch a ſeaſon,
What I muſt grieve to ſpeak, and you to hear.

MENDOZA.

Well, thou haſt credit for thy good intention,
Spare thy apologies, and tell thy tale!

LOPEZ.

'Tis thus, my lord—but promiſe me your pardon—

MENDOZA.

I'll pardon any thing but thy ſuſpence.

LOPEZ.

Know then, the ſteward of this houſe, Hernandez,
Has been obſerv'd to throw his daring arms
With ſuch licentious freedom round your bride,
As honour cannot brook.

MENDOZA.

Good ſimple fellow!
Is this thy wondrous tale? thy painful truth?

What! art thou yet to learn, that antient ſervants
Are amply privileg'd on days like this?
The man who bore the infant in his arms
May kiſs the ripen'd bride without a crime,
And the quick eye of jealouſy itſelf
Shall wink at his preſumption.—Get thee gone!

LOPEZ.

He boaſts he will attend you to Madrid;
Says he is fix'd for life my lady's uſher,
Defying e'en her huſband to diſplace him.

MENDOZA.

I will not quarrel with his honeſt pride,
Inebriate with joy;—yet as the world
Is prone to cenſure, 'twill perhaps be prudent
To ſtrike this boaſting vaſſal from our train:
But that hereafter.—Hence! my father comes—
Yet, Lopez, ſtay—one word with thee alone.

[*Exit with* Lopez.

Enter the Governor *and* Marcella.

MARCELLA.

Think not, thou kindeſt parent that e'er drew
From the fond eyes of a protected child

The tears of filial gratitude, think not
Thy daughter thankleſs for thy guardian care
From her impatient haſte to quit thy manſion!

GOVERNOR.

No! my ſweet child! I know thy heart too well
To doubt its tenderneſs. Truſt me, thy father,
Much as he joys to have thee in his ſight,
Feels in theſe moments all the forceful reaſons
That urge thy quick departure.

MARCELLA.

Then farewell
To this paternal roof! Ye walls, that echoed
With the gay muſic of my infant ſongs,
Farewell! If aught of evil hover o'er ye,
May it depart with me! depart for ever!
Safety and honour, pure celeſtial guards,
Watch o'er this dome! and bleſs its dear poſſeſſor!—
Hear this my parting prayer, indulgent Heaven!
Whate'er thy pleaſure may ordain for me,
Here or hereafter, grant, O grant me this,
To die before my father can have cauſe
To wiſh he were not author of my being!

GOVERNOR.

GOVERNOR.

Live but till then, and thou muſt be immortal!—
Riſe, my kind daughter!—Thou wilt ever prove
My age's darling; dearer to thy father
Than life or glory. Heaven, I truſt, for thee
Has years in ſtore of ſtill encreaſing joy.

MARCELLA.

Alas! my father, doſt thou not perceive
The poor Lupercio whiſpering from his ſhroud
How ſhort and how precarious mortal being!
If ſoon thou chance to hear thy child is dead,
And his ſhade tells me thou wilt hear it ſoon,
I pray thee let not an intemperate grief
Bend to the earth thy venerable age.
Yet O forget me not! with tender ſorrow
Give thy pure prayers to my departed ſoul!

GOVERNOR.

Riſe, riſe, my child!—Let not theſe gloomy fancies
O'ercloud thy chearful ſpirit! raiſe thine eyes
To all the radiant paths of varied pleaſure
That open now before thee!—See thy lord,
The bright conductor of thy future ſteps,

Comes, like the ſun new-riſen, to diſperſe
Theſe noxious vapours from thy darken'd mind,
And give thy charms new luſtre!

Enter Mendoza.

GOVERNOR.

Dear Mendoza,
We will from hence to-day: I will myſelf
Play the young ſoldier, and eſcort your bride
Acroſs this province.

MENDOZA.

Bleſs the travellers,
Whoſe road is ſhorten'd by ſo dear a guide!

GOVERNOR.

Raiſe thou that drooping lily, while I go
And iſſue orders for our quick departure. [*Exit.*

MENDOZA.

Come to my arms, thou ſweet ſeraphic being!
Come, and preſide o'er all my future life,
As a benignant angel, by whoſe guidance
I wiſh to regulate my every thought!—
Bleſs that kind tear! it is the ſweet reply
Of tenderneſs too delicate for language.—

Yet

Yet ſpeak, Marcella—my delighted ear
Doats on the muſic of thy ſoothing voice.

MARCELLA.

O had I but the power to make thee happy!
Were it but poſſible, thy life ſhould prove
Unclouded, as thy virtues and thy love!

MENDOZA.

In thee I've every bleſſing man can wiſh.
My conſcious pride, exulting in thy love,
Boldly defies the wantonneſs of fancy
To figure joys above th' unchequer'd bliſs
Which my full heart has found in thy perfection.
Be thou as happy as thou mak'ſt Mendoza,
And we ſhall live the envy of the world.—
Why guſh theſe tears? Why heaves thy lab'ring boſom?
Why roves thy troubled eye around the chamber,
Seeming to parley with the ſenſeleſs walls?—
My tender fair-one! I perceive thy thoughts:
This is the fond adieu which thy ſoft ſpirit
Expreſſes to this dear paternal manſion.
Be chear'd! thou ſoon ſhalt viſit it again,
When its glad gates ſhall leap at thy approach,

And ev'ry echoing ſtone repeat thy welcome.—
Still penſive!—Come, ſweet partner of my life!
Prepare we for our travels.—Have your women
Receiv'd their orders? Pray, ere we depart,
Inform Hernandez we will not deprive
His generous maſter of ſo tried a ſervant!
Tell him he muſt not quit his poſt.

MARCELLA.

I dare not.

MENDOZA.

How! dare not, didſt thou ſay? What! dare not utter
A juſt direction to an antient vaſſal?

MARCELLA.

He is the maſter of a fatal ſecret,
I dare not drive him to reveal.

MENDOZA.

A ſecret!
Haſt thou a ſecret thou canſt wiſh to hide
From the fond eye of all-forgiving love?

MARCELLA.

I have:—for thee, thou darling of my ſoul,
And for my father's peace, I ſtrongly wiſh'd

To bear it with me to an early grave,
And hide its painful horrors in the ſhade
Of haſten'd death:—but, like the inbred fire,
That burns its paſſage thro' the groaning earth,
Struggling, it burſts from my convulſive boſom,
And all the blazing ruin ruſhes on thee.

MENDOZA.

Amazement!—Thou haſt petrified my heart:
Yet ſpeak! whatever wretchedneſs awaits me,
I wiſh to hear it from no lips but thine.

MARCELLA.

Thou generous object of my fatal love!—
Wretch as I am, how ſhall I bear the pangs,
The keener pangs, I'm deſtin'd to inflict
On the pure heart I wiſh'd to make moſt happy?
Ill-ſtarr'd Mendoza! dear, deluded youth!
Thou fondly think'ſt thou'ſt taken to thy boſom
A ſpotleſs form of purity and truth;
But oh! 'tis ſtain'd by complicated crimes,
Too horrible for utterance.

MENDOZA.

Can it be?

Who but thyſelf ſhould call thee baſe, and live?
Thou canſt not be ſo: yet, I pray thee, ſpeak
The dreadful purport lab'ring on thy lips!

MARCELLA.

By Heaven I cannot! anguiſh, ſhame, remorſe
Stifle my words.—Here let me fall before thee!
In pity both to me and to thyſelf
Kill the vile wretch thus groveling at thy feet,
Before her guilty tale ſhall freeze thy blood.

MENDOZA.

Riſe, thou dear ſuff'rer; I conjure thee ſpeak—
No words, how horrible ſoe'er their import,
Can torture more than this ſoul-harrowing ſilence.

MARCELLA.

Lupercio——

MENDOZA.

What!—Thou knew'ſt not of his murder!

MARCELLA.

Hernandez——

MENDOZA.

Ha! was he the black aſſaſſin?

MARCELLA.

I did not place the poniard in his hand;
I did not aſk for blood: but my baſe falſhood,
Falſhood the offspring of my love to thee,
Led to that bloody deed.

MENDOZA.

My bride a murd'reſs!

MARCELLA.

Look not upon me thus! I cannot bear
The fierce abhorrence of thoſe angry eyes.
Plunge thy ſword here, and give me gentler death!

MENDOZA.

Thou canſt not be ſo guilty. Thou haſt injur'd
Thy own ſoft heart.—Unfold the fatal ſtory.

MARCELLA.

Thou'rt yet to hear accumulated horrors,
To make me ſtill more loathſome to thy ſight:
But I can never ſpeak them.—Kill me! kill me!
In mercy end my miſeries, before
The lightning of my father's indignation
Strikes his deteſted daughter into duſt.

MENDOZA.

MENDOZA.

Would I could ſave him from the pangs I feel!
But 'tis impoſſible, if thou art guilty.

MARCELLA.

It is, it is—then ſave me from his wrath!
Save my departing ſpirit from his curſe,
And death may then atone for my offences.
I only wiſh to die by that dear hand;
For oh! Mendoza, had not my fond heart
Doated upon thee with unbounded love,
We ne'er had known this miſerable hour.

MENDOZA.

'Tis true, thou lovely criminal!—O Heaven!
Why was ſhe fram'd with ſuch pernicious beauty?—
I dare not truſt myſelf to gaze upon thee
In this wild tumult of my madd'ning ſoul.—
Reſt in this chamber, and reſtrain thy tears,
While I regain ſome little uſe of reaſon,
To hear more calmly all thy wretched tale.

[*He leads* Marcella *weeping to the adjoining chamber, and cloſes the door upon her.*

MENDOZA.

MENDOZA.

What's to be done? my dizzy ſoul, thus falling
From joy's bright ſummit to theſe depths of horror,
Loſes the faculty of thought.—Here, Lopez!
Go! bring Hernandez inſtantly before me!

Enter the Governor.

My father! are you come? I wiſh'd your preſence,
Yet I would freely part with life, to ſave you
From the dread ſcene we muſt ſuſtain together.

GOVERNOR.

What means Mendoza?—whence thy alter'd viſage?—
What new affliction?—where's my hapleſs child?

MENDOZA.

Thou brave, thou good, affectionate old man,
It wounds my ſoul to tell thee, that thy roof
Harbours the murderer thy juſtice ſeeks.
Behold, he comes to anſwer for his crime!

[Lopez *and other Servants bring in* Hernandez.

GOVERNOR.

Hernandez!—Art thou certain of his guilt?
Or whence is thy ſurmiſe?

MENDOZA.

MENDOZA.

Hear and decide!—
Thou faithleſs ſervant, who haſt ſtain'd a life
Of long integrity by one black deed,
I charge thee with the blood of that brave youth
Thy maſter call'd his friend.—Say! art thou able
To plead thy innocence?—Thou need'ſt not ſpeak;
Thy guilty features anſwer thy accuſer.

HERNANDEZ *(aſide.)*

The trait'reſs has betray'd me: then, revenge,
Thou art the only ſweet that I can taſte,
And I will banquet on thee.

GOVERNOR.

If thou art
So baſe a monſter of ingratitude,
Prepare thyſelf for tortures.

HERNANDEZ.

Spare thy threats,
Thou know'ſt not yet the partner of my guilt:—
Thou wouldſt not chuſe to ſee thy daughter's beauty
Expos'd a mangled victim in thoſe ſtreets,

Where never eye ſurvey'd her paſſing form
But with delight or envy!

GOVERNOR.

Sland'rous ruffian!
Dar'ſt thou prophane the virtue of my child?—
But her pure ſoul could no more league with thine,
Than Heaven's moſt favor'd angel could deſcend
To aid the helliſh plots of that arch fiend
Who prompted thee to perpetrate this murder.

MENDOZA *(aſide to* Hernandez.)

Peace, villain! and if e'er thou hop'ſt for mercy,
Reſpect the feelings of a wounded father!

HERNANDEZ.

Talk not to me of mercy—I deſpiſe it.—
Death is, I know, my portion; but its pangs
Are turn'd to tranſport by my rich revenge.
Too long the jeſts of mockery were laviſh'd
On my miſhapen form and ardent love.
One gibing youth has paid me with his life,
For inſolent deriſion; and o'er thee,
Thou haughty huſband, thou fair golden image,

Whom

Whom beauty worſhips unconſtrain'd, o'er thee
My triumph riſes to a prouder height
Of bold revenge——I have enjoy'd thy bride.

MENDOZA.

Thou blood-ſtain'd lyar, hence!—Away with him
To ſtrict confinement in your deepeſt dungeon!

HERNANDEZ.

Bite thy proud frantic lip, in ſavage hope
To ſee my crooked body on the wheel
Cruſh'd, and expos'd a public ſpectacle!
My vengeance is conſummate; but for thine,
'Tis the vain menace of preſumptuous pride,
Which courage laughs at:—I eſcape it thus.

[*Stabs himſelf.*

MENDOZA.

Thou haſt indeed eluded the ſlow hand
Of human juſtice, but thou canſt not foil
The ſurer vengeance of high-judging Heaven.

GOVERNOR.

Go! bring thy wife! ſhe muſt appear this inſtant.
The form of injur'd innocence muſt draw

From the pale lips of this expiring villain
Th' avowal of his falſhood.

HERNANDEZ.

My dim eyes
Are cloſing, and in this deceitful world
Shall look no more upon her fatal beauty:
But in the next—O mercy! [*Dies.*

GOVERNOR.

Where is my daughter?

MARCELLA *(entering.)*

Here's the hapleſs being,
Who once was proud of that endearing name:
Tho' fallen, leſs guilty than the world might judge me,
From the baſe inſult of this bleeding wretch,
Whoſe crimes are clos'd by death; yet O! my father,
Too vile to claim thy kindneſs, or to live.

GOVERNOR.

Wrong not thyſelf! thou art all innocence.

MARCELLA.

Thou dear, deluded parent—'twas my wiſh
To die, and not deprive thee of a thought,

In which thy virtuous ſpirit would have found
Sweet conſolation for thy loſt delight.—
I wiſh'd a little longer to ſupport
This wretched being, that I might not ſtain,
By my accelerated fate, this manſion,
The dear aſylum of thy honour'd age!
But my gall'd ſpirit, never form'd to bear
The heavy load of unacknowledg'd guilt,
Sunk in its painful efforts to ſuſtain it.
Hence the quick end of that abhorr'd aſſaſſin!
And hence thy child, atoning now by death
For her conceal'd offences, thus implores thee
To pardon, and to bleſs her parting ſpirit!

GOVERNOR.

O thou dear ſufferer! whate'er thy failings,
Attempt not aught againſt thy precious life!

MENDOZA.

Live, I conjure thee, and the tears of love
Shall waſh th' ideal blemiſh from thy heart.

MARCELLA.

My generous huſband! let me ſpeak that name,
Still precious to me, tho' ſo raſhly purchas'd!

Think not thy injur'd bride deſign'd to give
To thy chaſte bed a vile diſhonour'd partner,
Tho' forcibly diſhonour'd!

GOVERNOR.

Ha, my child!
Haſt thou endur'd from that atrocious ruffian—

MARCELLA.

O good my father, aſk not my faint voice,
Which ſoon will ſink in everlaſting ſilence,
T' unfold a tale, whoſe utterance would call
Shame's burning bluſh to the pale cheek of death.—
A friendly poiſon has already numb'd
My vital faculties, but I have left
A written legacy of fatal fondneſs,
In which, unleſs my blotting tears have marr'd it,
You'll read what I have done, and what endur'd.—
Nay, weep not! both of you may love me dead,
Living you could not.

MENDOZA.

Could affection reſcue
Thy beauty from the grave, thou ſhould'ſt not die.

MARCELLA.

MARCELLA.

I know, ye generous ſpirits, death will cancel
In your kind mem'ries all my fatal errors:
And hence its pangs are welcome.—One baſe purpoſe
Produc'd theſe ſcenes of unexpected horror;
But Heaven has will'd that crime ſhould quicken crime,
To ſhew the danger of one devious ſtep
From the clear paths of probity and truth.—
My dear Mendoza! thou wilt not deny me
The title of thy wife to grace my tomb,
And I ſhall ſleep in peace.—Conſole my father,
And let him find in thee a worthier child!
I had a heart to reverence his virtues,
But not the ſtrength to imitate.—O Heaven! [*Dies.*

MENDOZA.

'Tis gone! 'tis fled! the proud, the lovely ſoul,
That could not brook the ſhadow of diſhonour!
Thy monument ſhall be the nuptial bed
On which Mendoza will recline, and breathe
His faithful fondneſs to thy liſt'ning ſpirit.
Nor will I ſlight the dear and hallow'd truſt,
Bequeath'd by filial piety, to ſhield

With

With conſtant care thy father's honour'd age.—
Unhappy father! round the livid breaſt
Of his loſt child in ſpeechleſs agony
His arms are riveted!—Aid me to raiſe,
And bear him gently from this ſcene of death!

THE

TWO CONNOISSEURS;

A COMEDY,

OF THREE ACTS,

IN RHYME.

Perſons of the Drama.

LORD SEEWELL,
MR. BERIL,
MR. BIJOU,
MR. CYCLE,
TOM CARELESS,
HARRY, Servant to MR. BERIL,
MR. VARNISH.

LADY HARRIOT,
LADY FRANCES, } Daughters of LORD SEEWELL,
MRS. BIJOU,
JOAN.

THE

TWO CONNOISSEURS.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *Chambers in the Temple.*

Tom Careleſs *and* Mr. Cycle.

CARELESS.

WHATE'ER the ſucceſs of your journey may be,
My dear rural ſage, you are welcome to me:
Your benevolent projects I hope you'll complete,
By this trip from your ſnug ſcientific retreat.
In return for amuſement you've given me there,
By your fine apparatus, and lectures on air,

I'll ſhew you the town; and the town is a ſcience.

MR. CYCLE.

On my tutor, dear Tom, I've a perfect reliance,
For I know in that ſtudy what vigils you've kept.

CARELESS.

'Tis the only one, truly, where I'm an adept;
For as to the law, that's the ſcience of thorns,
And tho' its black robe my lean figure adorns,
Perhaps twice a year, for my father's good pleaſure,
I've renounc'd, I confeſs, both its toil and its treaſure.
From my ſapient Lord Coke this advantage I gain;
He led me to find out a flaw in my brain,
That title! on which, as wiſe parents have done,
My father laid claim to the ſeals for his ſon.

MR. CYCLE.

Such language, dear Tom, is in truth but a brogue,
That betrays the young heir as an indolent rogue.
'Tis the cant of ye all—ye want talents to drudge.

CARELESS.

Well! think me, my friend, wiſe enough for a judge,
I ſtill muſt rejoice I have nothing to do,
As my heart now inclines me to wait upon you.

I wiſh

I wiſh I could raiſe you the caſh you require,
But you know I depend on a cloſe-handed ſire,
Who promiſes largely, and often has ſaid
He will make me a Crœſus whenever I wed;
But to drive me, I think, to the conjugal ſtate,
Keeps the purſe of the batchelor woefully ſtrait;
And guineas at preſent are ſcarce, to my ſorrow.
How much are you now come to London to borrow?
Two thouſand, d'ye ſay?

MR. CYCLE.

Yes! two thouſand at leaſt,
And perhaps rather more, as my plan is increas'd.
I wiſh for no profit, but public eſteem;
And much good to the world muſt ariſe from my ſcheme.

CARELESS.

Well! I wiſh you may proſper, but, as I'm a ſinner,
I as ſoon ſhould expect a roaſt Phenix for dinner,
As in times like the preſent ſuch loans from a friend,
When Opulence has not a ſtiver to lend.
You philoſophers look with contempt upon caſh;
But the fools of this town are ſo fond of the traſh,
That as you're a chemiſt, both ſkillful and bold,
You had beſt try to make a few odd lumps of gold;

And this newly-found art you may try with leſs coſt,
Since to borrow with eaſe ſeems an art that is loſt.

MR. CYCLE.

Dear Careleſs, you're welcome to rally my hopes;
So attack them with all your rhetorical tropes!
The man is ill-wrapt in philoſophy's cloak,
Whoſe boſom is ruffled, dear Tom, by a joke.
I know money's ſcarce; yet I will not deſpond:
I've two friends who'll ſupply what I want, on my bond.

CARELESS.

What! *two* ſuch good friends! ſo rich, open, and free!
Dear Cycle, I pray introduce them to me;
For not one of that caſt my long liſt can produce:
Why! man, ſuch a friend is the golden-egg'd gooſe;
You may hunt for the bird e'en as long as you're able,
But at laſt you will find it is only a fable.
I wanted but one hundred pound, t'other day,
And aſk'd fifty friends, that chance threw in my way,
But they all ſhook their heads, with a negative nod,
So I dunn'd my old father, in ſpite of the rod.
But pray do I know the good creatures you mean?

MR. CYCLE.

Aye! both.—They're two friends, whom for years I've not ſeen;

But

But in juvenile days I held each as my brother,
And I truſt that we all are ſtill dear to each other.
You're acquainted with Beril—

CARELESS.

Well! there, I confeſs,
Your wiſhes have ſome little chance of ſucceſs.
If there's one in the world, who, regardleſs of pelf,
Would relieve a friend's wants, tho' he ſtraiten'd himſelf,
You have now nam'd the man. Yet perhaps he can't lend:
I know he has ſuffer'd by aiding a friend;
And I fancy he has but a ſlender eſtate.
'Tis true, he don't play, tho' careſt by the great;
Yet in ſtatues and books he's expenſive, 'tis ſaid—
I have ſeen him bid high for a porphyry head.

MR. CYCLE.

'Tis hard, fortune ſtill ſhould torment him with croſſes;
I ſooth'd him to bear the ſevereſt of loſſes:
I was with him, when blaſted in youth's blooming charms
His lovely Sophia was torn from his arms.
You knew not, I think, that unfortunate fair,
The victim of cruelty, love, and deſpair.

She

She was bound to our friend by a mutual affection,
But her rich ſordid parents oppos'd the connection.
The canker of ſorrow inceſſantly prey'd
On the periſhing bloom of the delicate maid:
Her duty, her ſuff'rings, made nature relent;
And wrung from her father a tardy conſent;
But death render'd vain the late ſanction he gave,
And his child's bridal bed was the pitileſs grave.
Many years have now ſoften'd the lover's wild grief:
Perhaps ſome new beauty now yields him relief.
He's ſtill ſingle, I think?

CARELESS.

Yes! in learning and art
He has ſought the chief balm for the wounds of his heart;
Hence a pleaſing mild elegance runs thro' his life;
And had I a ſiſter I'd wiſh her his wife.—
But now for your ſecond friend!—What is his name?
For acquaintance with him too I'll certainly claim.
You ſay that I know him: come! tell me who is it!

MR. CYCLE.

Yes! indeed, it is one whom you frequently viſit.

And

And here you muſt own, that my hopes are well founded,
Since in kindneſs and wealth he has ever abounded;
And a legacy lately——

CARELESS.

You don't mean Bijou,
That collector of knick-knacks?

MR. CYCLE.

Indeed, Tom, I do.
I've a title to aſk any favor from him:
He has ſome little vanity, ſome little whim,
Yet ſtill he's a friendly, benevolent man.

CARELESS.

You may rap at his door—but get in if you can!
Your friend, when you ſaw him, was jocund and free,
His heart full of bounty, his ſpirit of glee;
His vanities too had ſo mirthful a caſt,
That Friendſhip herſelf even wiſh'd them to laſt.
But Marriage, that changer of mind and of feature,
Has made poor Bijou quite a different creature.

MR. CYCLE.

I am told that his wife, with a pocket well laden,
Was a little, fat, ancient, and well-behav'd maiden;
Who,

Who, having a ſimilar taſte for virtù,
Put her cabinet under the care of Bijou.

CARELESS.

Yes, indeed! in an odd fit of amorous hunger,
He married an old curioſity-monger,
Who is ready to faint, if a viſitor knocks
While ſhe's bruſhing the duſt from her raree-ſhew box.
Her maid t'other day threw her into a ſwoon,
By cracking the eye of a great ſtuff'd baboon;
For inſtead of young children, whoſe troubleſome noiſe
Might diſturb their ſedate, *virtuoſical* joys,
She fills their fine houſe with new monſters or mummies.

MR. CYCLE.

Of your ſtory, dear Tom, I perceive what the ſum is.
You don't like the lady:—ſhe may not pleaſe you,
And yet be an excellent wife for Bijou.
I am told ſhe has really much merit and taſte.
In her morals they ſay ſhe's remarkably chaſte;
So with lectures, perhaps, ſhe has wounded your ear,
And you rakes of the Temple may think her ſevere.

CARELESS.

No, faith! with the lady I ſtand very well,
I bought her eſteem with an old empty ſhell.

I own ſhe has piety, morals, and ſenſe:
To chaſtity no one will doubt her pretence.
But tho' with theſe virtues I freely inveſt her,
My heart, I confeſs, is inclin'd to deteſt her.
She has ruin'd her huſband—at leaſt ſo I think;
To a dwarf ſhe has made his benevolence ſhrink,
And puff'd up his vanity into a giant.
To all her ſtrange whims he's ſo ſervilely pliant,
He'd obey her caprice, whatſoe'er it might hint,
And deny himſelf bread to buy her an odd flint.

MR. CYCLE.

Why, Tom, that's a proof of his fond tender heart.

CARELESS.

To me it proves nought but her ladyſhip's art:
And ſo you yourſelf would explain the whole riddle,
If you heard her once flatter his pencil or fiddle,
As a more wretched bruſh never blotted poor paper,
And ne'er ſqueak'd a Cremona beneath a worſe ſcraper.
Tho' pamper'd with flattery thus by his wife,
Our friend has quite loſt all his humor and life;
And whenever I look on his cold chearleſs face,
As he ſtands by the ſide of his wife's foſſil-caſe,

I think her a perfect Meduſa, I own,
Who has turn'd her poor huſband himſelf into ſtone.

MR. CYCLE.

You loungers, dear Tom, in your idle diſputes,
Love to ridicule all life's amuſing purſuits:
But they all have their uſe; and the lady who joys
In collecting an odd ſet of whimſical toys,
Is herſelf a rare gem, that my judgment regards,
More than all the fair votaries of ſcandal and cards.
I know I ſhall like her, in ſpite of your ſtricture,
And I'm going to ſee how you've fail'd in her picture.
My old friend's good-will I ſhall put to the trial,
And ſolicit his aid without fear of denial.

CARELESS.

Come along!—I will ſee if your welcome is hearty;
Indeed I may ſerve you by joining the party,
And I'm eager to know (for my portrait is true)
What you think of the change ſhe has wrought in Bijou.
To a knowledge of nature I ne'er will pretend,
If, when you have ſeen, in the houſe of our friend,
All the natural rarities rang'd in a glaſs,
You don't rank his heart in the petrified claſs. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE

SCENE *changes to a Drawing Room at* Mrs. Bijou's, *with a Door open into an interior Cabinet of Curioſities— Several ſtuff'd Creatures and other Rarities diſcovered in the Apartment.*

JOAN, *with a Bruſh.*

Lackaday! would I once were well out of this houſe,
Where I tremble to move, full as much as a mouſe!
And Nanny's afraid to come into this room;
Indeed the poor creature can ſcarce hold a broom,
For my miſtreſs, ſhe ſays, has done nothing but bait her,
Since ſhe bruſh'd off the tail of the new alligator.
I've a great mind to lay up my bruſh on the ſhelf,
And leave madam to duſt all her monſters herſelf.
Would my maſter would make her, for theſe ſtocks and ſtones,
A young little plaything of good fleſh and bones!
But, alas! theſe old ladies who can't raiſe a baby,
Are as full of nonſenſical maggots as may be.
And our houſe is ſo cramm'd with this whimſical jumble,
That if you touch one thing, another will tumble.

Madam ſays, I miſplace whatſoever I clean,
But I'll venture to wipe off the duſt from this ſcreen.
[*Throws it down.*
A plague take the things! they do nothing but fall.
Lud! my fingers have run thro' the cover and all.
[*Taking up the Screen, and uncovering it.*
'Tis my maſter's new drawing—how madam will thunder—
This fine naked beauty I've torn quite aſunder:
And the rent muſt be ſeen—I can thruſt my whole thumb in,
And I've no time to mend it—my miſtreſs is coming.—

MRS. BIJOU *(entering in a dark brown Bed-gown, with a Bruſh of Peacock's Feathers.)*

Some new miſchief's done here.—Lord! Joan, what's the matter?
I am ſure you broke ſomething—I heard ſuch a clatter.

JOAN.

Indeed, Ma'am, I've had a moſt cruel diſaſter.
The ſcreen——

MRS. BIJOU.

What! the beautiful work of your maſter!

JOAN.

JOAN.

My finger ſlipt thro, as I wip'd it in haſte,
But I'm ſure I can mend it again with ſome paſte.

MRS. BIJOU.

You awkward, pert huſſey! pray let it alone!
Can paſte mend a flaw in a goddeſs's zone?
Ye ſtars! give me patience!—Get out of this door,
And pray let me never ſet eyes on you more!
I knew I ſhould ſuffer as ſoon as you came,
For taking a thing with ſo gothic a name.

JOAN.

I'll go—for I live but the life of a cur:
Yet pray! on my name do not throw any ſlur!
I am ſure 'tis good Engliſh, altho' it is Joan,
And that's more than you're able to ſay of your own.

[*Exit.*

MR. BIJOU *(entering.)*

What's the matter, my dear?—What new plague from your maids?
You for ever are vext by theſe peſtilent jades:
If bred in this town, you object to their morals;
If ruſtics, they break all your glaſſes or corals.

Let

Let 'em come whence they will, they bring trouble and
ſtrife,
And your quarrels have made me half ſick of my life.

MRS. BIJOU.

Don't ſay ſo!—You know, my dear Mr. Bijou,
I take no young maids, out of fondneſs to you;
And theſe middle-ag'd creatures are all ſo unhandy,
They make me as fretful as old Mr. Shandy.
But, my dear, if you ſee me ſometimes in a flame,
I think you won't ſay that my temper's to blame:
'Twas my love for the works of your delicate hand,
Which produc'd an emotion I could not command.
If I rated old Joan in a great agitation,
I am ſure you will own I had much provocation,
When you ſee this ſad cauſe of the buſtle between us:
She has utterly ruin'd your very beſt Venus,
This new lovely drawing! the joy of all eyes!
I vow I could cry.—

MR. BIJOU.

What ſweet ſoftneſs!—ſhe cries!—
Theſe feelings, indeed, prove the true connoiſſeur:
This ill treatment of Art her fine ſenſe can't endure.

Henceforth,

Henceforth, of my works let them ſay what they will,
No painter can boaſt ſuch a teſt of his ſkill.—
Come, chear up, my dear Cognoſcente! come! come!
I can mend it again with a bruſh-full of gum.

MRS. BIJOU.

D'ye think you can mend it?—and won't it look brown,
If you don't hide the ſkin with the ſkirt of a gown?
'Twould be pity to cloak up a body ſo fine,
Eſpecially ſince you have drawn it from mine.
And you know I caught cold, when I ſtript to the waiſt,
To ſit for the figure, in true attic taſte:
But I did it from fondneſs, that you might not roam,
And wickedly hunt after models from home.
To be ſure I love art—but all artiſts, they ſay,
By their ſtudies of nature are tempted to ſtray;
And I own that your genius gives me great alarms.

MR. BIJOU.

My dear, tender creature! pray truſt your own charms!

MRS. BIJOU.

Affectionate terrors will riſe in my head.
I was jealous, I own, t'other day of the dead.

MR. BIJOU.

What fond ſenſibility! exquiſite feeling!

MRS. BIJOU.

I hope I was wrong, but ſtrange fancies will ſteal in,
When fondneſs has open'd the heart to ſuſpicion.
You're ſo dear to the females of every condition:
But, I hope, Lady Fancybird was not ſo vicious;
There was nothing, indeed, in her air meretricious;
Yet a jealous pang ſeiz'd me, I own, when I found
That by will ſhe bequeath'd to you three thouſand pound.
'Tis true, that a legacy's very commodious;
Yet the money appears to me utterly odious,
When I think it was poſſibly meant as the price
Of endearments, to which ſhe had art to entice,
And not in return for the pictures you drew,
Of her parrot, her bull-finch, and old cockatoo.

MR. BIJOU.

Lord! my dear, if ſuch phantoms your quiet conſume,
You will make the old lady jump out of her tomb.
'Tis true, that I flatter'd her favourite paſſion,
As I love to be well with old ladies of faſhion:

But pray don't ſuppoſe, I was e'er ſo abſurd
As to ſtroke her pale cheek for the pole of her bird.

MRS. BIJOU.

Ah! you humorous man, you've ſuch infinite wit,
You can turn to a jeſt whatſoe'er you think fit!—
But my heart on this point can be never at eaſe,
Unleſs you'll allow me to ſpend, as I pleaſe,
Half the money, of which you're ſo oddly poſſeſt;
And then I ſhall think it an honeſt bequeſt.
Beſides, there's an auction at Lady Toy-Truckle's,
And I long for a rap at the Ducheſs's knuckles,
Who out-bid me, you know, t'other day, for a ſhell.
'Tis all for your credit.

MR. BIJOU.

Well! well! my dear, well!
I never refuſe you the caſh I can ſpare.

MRS. BIJOU.

You are ſure I ſhall turn it to ſomething moſt rare:
For indeed I'm no pitiful hoarder of pelf;
And I've now ſet my heart on ſome true antient delf.

MR. BIJOU.

'Tis time you were dreſt.

MRS. BIJOU.

As I live, there's a rap;
I'm not fit to be ſeen, in this bed-gown and cap.
Run! and charge them, my dear, not to let in a ſoul!—
With my cabinet duſt I'm as black as a coal.

MR. BIJOU *(looking out.)*

I'm too late.

MRS. BIJOU.

For my orders they don't care a pin;
And to vex me, old Joan has let ſomebody in.
I'll eſcape—I can't bear to be ſeen in this trim.

MR. BIJOU.

'Tis only Tom Careleſs—you need not mind him.

Enter Careleſs *and* Mr. Cycle.

CARELESS.

Here, good folks! I have brought you a very rare bird;
'Tis five years ſince his notes in this town have been heard.

MR. BIJOU.

Mr. Cycle! my worthy, old friend! how d'ye do?—
Give me leave to preſent to you Mrs. Bijou!

MRS.

MRS. BIJOU.

I'm aſham'd to be found in this garb.

MR. BIJOU.

O! my dear,
From a man of true ſcience you've nothing to fear;
He'll freely allow, for he's candid and juſt,
Philoſophical ladies muſt dabble in duſt.—
Mr. Cycle, my wife is a curious collector:
In natural knowledge I hope you'll direct her;
You are maſter of all, from the earth to the ſtars,
And may aid her in ranging her foſſils and ſpars.

MR. CYCLE.

She ſhall freely command all the little I know.

MRS. BIJOU.

You're extremely obliging, dear Sir, to ſay ſo!
But I cannot attend you in this duſty veſt,
I'll ſoon ſlip it off.

CARELESS.

You ſha'n't ſtir, I proteſt.
To talk of your dreſs, my dear Ma'am, is a joke,
To a ſage, who exiſts but in chemical ſmoke.

Your robe is indeed like the robe of Saint Bruno,
Yet ſtill by your air we might take you for Juno,
While the tail of your peacock, that type of command,
With ſuch dignity waves in your awful white hand.

MRS. BIJOU.

You're a young ſaucy creature!—

MR. CYCLE.

Theſe idle rogues, Madam,
More like ſons of the Serpent, than children of Adam,
Are apt to eſteem it a dull occupation,
To ſtudy the wonders of this fair creation:
And hence they all rally, with humor ill plac'd,
Thoſe who ſeek for amuſement in ſcience and taſte.

MR. BIJOU.

Well ſaid! Mr. Cycle—I'm glad that Virtu
Has found both a friend and a champion in you.
Come and peep at my wife's philoſophical treaſure!
I hope you'll ſurvey it again, at your leiſure.—
My dear, d'ye allow me to ſhew your muſeum?—
I'm exact in all matters of *tuum* and *meum*.

MRS.

MRS. BIJOU.

Mr. Cycle, I'm ſure, is a privileg'd man.

MR. BIJOU.

It is open.—Come, Sir!

[*Exit with* Mr. Cycle, *into the interior Apartment.*

MRS. BIJOU.

Tell me, Tom, if you can,
Is not this Mr. Cycle a man of great worth,
Who wrote a moſt excellent book on the Earth.

CARELESS.

'Tis the author himſelf; and I know not what college
Can ſhew his ſuperior in virtue and knowledge.
He's a man of few words, with a heart and a mind
Ever buſied in ſchemes for the good of mankind;
And he now viſits London, in hopes to procure
Some ſupport in a plan for relieving the poor.

MRS. BIJOU.

The poor!—of their name I'm alarm'd at the mention:
Mr. Cycle, indeed, may have no ill intention,
But I fear he'll involve my good huſband in trouble—
Theſe projects of charity end in a bubble.

The

The poor are ungrateful, diſorderly wretches,
Who can ſhift for themſelves by their tricks and their fetches;
They deſerve not a learned philoſopher's thought.

CARELESS.

Your pardon!—He'll think, if he thinks as he ought,
That Philoſophy, drawing from Heaven her birth,
Is the ſcience of ſoft'ning the evils on earth.
By your fears you have done our friend infinite wrong,
For tho' his heart's tender, his judgment is ſtrong:
To the projects of Folly he never can ſtoop—
Philanthropy's friend is not Phantaſy's dupe.

MRS. BEDOU.

Why, Careleſs! you talk in a language quite new:
Who could dream of a charity ſermon from you?

CARELESS.

Oh! a cobler can preach, when his ſpirit's inflam'd.
Mine is apt to blaze forth, if I hear a friend blam'd;
And indeed I can't ſtifle my heart's ebullitions,
When ſuch good folks as you harbour vile ſuppoſitions.
But I'm ſure you'll forgive all the warmth I have ſhewn,
When the worth of our friend is to you better known.

If

If you're angry, I know that your anger will ceaſe,
When you hear on what terms I can purchaſe my peace.
A ſhell I can bring you—my intereſt ſuch is—
Very like what you lately gave up to the Ducheſs.
Perhaps I may give it you—

MRS. BIJOU.

You're a good ſoul——
As large as her Grace's, and perfectly whole?

CARELESS.

Yes, I think 'tis as large, and in colour as high.

MRS. BIJOU.

Are you ſure of its ſhape?

CARELESS.

Do you queſtion my eye?
I'll convince you I'm right; let us inſtantly look
At the fine colour'd plates in your great Daniſh book.

MRS. BIJOU.

Come—you give me more joy than I'm able to ſpeak—
I can't bear that her Grace ſhould poſſeſs an *Unique*.

[*They retire into the interior Apartment, from whence*
Mr. Bijou *and* Mr. Cycle *return.*

MR. BIJOU.

This ſcheme, my good friend, does you honor indeed.
In a buſineſs ſo noble I hope you'll proceed;
And may you accompliſh your utmoſt deſires,
In raiſing the ſum which your project requires!—
Pray look at this new little drawing of mine!
Don't you think it an elegant pretty deſign?

MR. CYCLE.

Very lively indeed!—But, my friend, you forget
What I've ſaid on the point of incurring this debt.
Do not fly from the ſubject!—I hate all evaſion:
I muſt ſay for your aid I have ſerious occaſion.
You know what I've aſk'd, and in aſking I deem,
That I give you a proof of my cordial eſteem.
In a poor-houſe myſelf I would rather work hard,
Than apply thus to one whom I did not regard.

MR. BIJOU.

Mr. Cycle, I know you're a man without guile,
And you think in a noble and ſingular ſtyle;
But if aſking for caſh is of love a ſure teſt,
With affectionate friends all the wealthy are bleſt.

MR. CYCLE.

I have done, as I ſee that you wiſh to evade
A requeſt, that I thought I with juſtice had made;
As you know, when of fortune you felt a reverſe,
You had once the command of my proſperous purſe;
And ſince you of opulence now are poſſeſt,
More enrich'd too of late by a friendly bequeſt,
I ſuppos'd, without trouble—

MR. BIJOU.

Dear Cycle, 'tis true:
You ſhall have it; but mum! towards Mrs. Bijou!

MR. CYCLE.

O! I now underſtand all the cauſe of demur;
And if that is the caſe, I have done, my dear Sir.
At the hazard of diſcord the ſum you ſha'n't lend;
In family ſtrife I'll not plunge my old friend.

MR. BIJOU.

Do not think me a ſlave!—there's no danger of ſtrife:
But you'll find, if you e'er try the conjugal life,
It is beſt not to waken the frowns of a wife.
Beſides, there is ſurely no reaſon why you
Should talk on ſuch buſineſs to Mrs. Bijou.

MR. CYCLE.

There is certainly none—you ſhall do as you pleaſe.

MR. BIJOU.

One thouſand, my friend, I can ſpare you with eaſe;
'Tis the ſum I ſhall go to receive very ſoon;
If you'll call here again, you ſhall have it by noon.
And to tell you the truth, I would have you make haſte,
Leſt my wife ſhould demand it for matters of taſte.
When an auction is near, ſhe is apt to be raſh,
In laying her hand upon all my looſe caſh;
And as ſhe is thought ſo judicious a buyer,
Her elegant wiſhes I ſeldom deny her.
Yet 'tis time to grow prudent:—but huſh! here they come.
Remember my charge—dear philoſopher, mum!

Enter Mrs. Bijou *and* Careleſs.

MRS. BIJOU.

O my dear! I'm in raptures: my young friend has cur'd
All the bitter vexation I've lately endur'd.
Now in ſhells by the Ducheſs I am not ſurpaſt;
Tom will bring me the fellow to what ſhe bought laſt.

MR. BIJOU.

He's exceedingly kind!—But, my dear, it grows late;
Remember the gueſt, whom you muſt not make wait.
Old Baron Van-Bettle 's appointed to-day
Your curious collection of flies to ſurvey;
As ſome buſineſs abroad will oblige me to leave him,
I entreat you, my dear, to be dreſt to receive him.
Theſe friends will excuſe you.

MRS. BIJOU.

I'll bid them farewell.
Mr. Cycle, your ſervant!—Remember the ſhell! [*Exit.*

MR. BIJOU.

O my friend! you've a thouſand new drawings to ſee.—
I can tell you, our artiſts grow jealous of me.

JOAN *(entering haſtily.)*

Sir, a coach is juſt ſtopt, and a man with a ſtar on—

MR. BIJOU.

Od's life! I muſt leave you, to wait on the Baron.

MR. CYCLE.

I beg we mayn't keep you.

MR. BIJOU.

My good friends, adieu!
Dear Cycle! pray meet me again here at two!
I am ſorry I'm forc'd thus to part with you now,
But for ſuch an engagement I'm ſure you'll allow;
For the flies are all rang'd in the parlour below,
And a gueſt like the Baron one can't leave, you know.
As the key's in the caſe, he perhaps might unlock it,
And whip the beſt butterfly into his pocket.
'Tis a law with the curious to watch a collector,
And you never muſt truſt him without an inſpector.

[*Exit.*

CARELESS.

Now, my friend, what d'ye ſay to the portrait I drew?
Were my colours too dark for good Madam Bijou?
But how have you far'd in your money-petition?
If you get it, I'll call you a mighty magician.
I can tell you, that Madam ſuſpected a plot.

MR. CYCLE.

I've his promiſe—but ſhall I accept it, or not?

CARELESS.

CARELESS.

If you can, by all means!—'twill be ſav'd from her clutches,
Who would throw it away in out-bidding a Ducheſs:
And at auctions indeed ſhe'd her huſband undo,
Were ſhe not in her houſe quite a cloſe-handed Jew.
But on ſaving a penny ſhe frequently ponders,
And her avarice ſcrapes what her vanity ſquanders.—
O! if I were her maſter, her whimſies I'd cure,
And make a good wife of this vile connoiſſeur.—
Now for Beril——he's one of a different caſt.

MR. CYCLE.

Come along!—ſince I ſaw him ſome long years have paſt,
And I'm eager to claſp his affectionate hand.

CARELESS.

Stop a moment! and anſwer me this one demand!
Don't you ſee a ſad change in our poor friend below?
Where's the lively companion, the humorous beau?
All his pleaſantry's gone—

MR. CYCLE.

I confeſs, by his carriage,
He ſeems to be render'd more ſerious by marriage.

CARELESS.

By my life, I am griev'd, in thus ſeeing him grow
The poor trumpeting ſlave to his wife's raree-ſhew.—
Well! ye Gods! if, whenever my nuptial ſtar twinkles,
I ſhould wed an old hunter of odd periwinkles,
To engage her nice eye with unchanging attraction,
May I turn in her arms to a cold petrifaction!

End of ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I. *An elegant Apartment, ornamented with a few Buſts and Books, a large Statue covered up, and a Door open into a more extenſive Library.*

Mr. Beril *and* Harry.

MR. BERIL.

PRAY, Harry, remove from the ſtatue its caſe;
And be careful in clearing the duſt from its baſe.

HARRY.

Directly, Sir?

MR. BERIL.

Yes! you muſt inſtantly do it,
For my worthy Lord Seewell is coming to view it.—
Now, my ſweet Lady Frances! I ſoon ſhall behold
All thy quick ſenſibility wake and unfold:
Thou wilt pay to this ſculpture the tribute moſt dear;
Thou wilt praiſe the fine work by an eloquent tear,
Unleſs by gay Harriot thy ſoftneſs is check'd.
How I long in thy features to mark the effect

Produc'd

Produc'd by the wonders of exquiſite art,
On a delicate mind and a ſenſible heart!
But why on thy graces do I raſhly dwell?
Why ſtudy thoſe charms, that I know but too well?
In my ſtation 'tis madneſs to think of thy hand;
Yet thou, of all women in this lovely land,
Thou only could'ſt fill, in my deſolate breaſt,
The place that my tender Sophia poſſeſt.

HARRY *(advancing.)*

There, Sir, 'tis as neat as a new-twiſted cord;
But I hope you won't ſell this fine thing to my Lord.
He's a deſperate bidder for ſtone-work, I'm told;
Yet I hope you will keep it in ſpite of his gold.

MR. BERIL.

Do you hope ſo?—pray why?—I ſhould rather have thought
You'd rejoice if his lordſhip the ſtatue had bought;
It would ſave you ſome trouble.

HARRY.

For that I don't care.
Why I wiſh you to keep it, I'll freely declare:—
I've

I've obſerv'd, ſince the day that poor Miſs Sophy died,
And that's five years, I think, next Bartholomew-tide,
There is only this ſtatue, that's now in our ſight,
In which you have ſeem'd to take any delight;
And if this marble woman your heart ſo engages,
Before you ſhould ſell her I'd give up my wages.

MR. BERIL.

Thou'rt a generous lad, with an excellent heart!—
Honeſt Harry! the ſtatue and I ſhall not part.
But I hear a coach ſtop:—haſte, and let my Lord in!

[*Exit* Harry.

MR. BERIL *(alone.)*

Harry's warmth is affecting.—'Tis pleaſant to win
A regard unconſtrain'd from the low ranks of life,
Which are falſely ſuppos'd full of baſeneſs and ſtrife.
How miſtaken is he, who inceſſantly raves,
That domeſtics are nothing but idiots or knaves!
When nature oft ſhines, with a luſtre moſt fervent,
In the zeal of an honeſt, affectionate ſervant.

Enter Lord Seewell, *with* Lady Frances *and* Lady Harriot.

LORD SEEWELL.

Dear Beril, my girls would attend me, to ſee
Either you or your ſtatue.—Howe'er that may be,
I know you'll allow them a ſight of your treaſure.

MR. BERIL.

My Lord, I confeſs, I had hopes of this pleaſure;
And my ſtatue henceforth I more highly ſhall rate,
Since to that I'm in debt for an honor ſo great.

LADY HARRIOT.

That's right, Mr. Beril:—I pray make it known,
That we come for the ſake of the marble alone;
For tho' we have both a fair name, as I think,
Yet our poor reputations will inſtantly ſink,
If 'tis ſaid by your neighbour, old Lady Snap-Fan,
That inſtead of a ſtatue, we viſit a man.

MR. BERIL.

If on ſpirit and worth there is any reliance,
Lady Harriot may ſet every hag at defiance;

And force even Scandal in ſilence to ſit—
If not juſt to her innocence, aw'd by her wit.

LADY HARRIOT.

My dear Sir, do not talk in ſo pleaſing a tone,
If you do, I ſha'n't reliſh the ſilence of ſtone,
And the ſtatue 'll ſeem dull.—So pray! tell us where is it,
Pray preſent us to her that we're now come to viſit.

MR. BERIL.

Here's the lady you honour. [*Shewing the Statue.*

LORD SEEWELL.

Indeed, this is fine:
What perfect expreſſion! what ſtrength of deſign!

MR. BERIL.

Pray! my dear Lady Frances, advance to the place,
Which will give you, I think, the beſt view of the face.
'Tis the tender Alceſtis, juſt yielding her breath,
On the arm of her huſband reclining in death;
And tho' pain o'er her form ſo much languor has thrown,
You may ſtill diſcern beauties reſembling your own.

LORD SEEWELL.

Whence came it, dear Beril?—'tis ſurely antique;
The work, my good friend, is undoubtedly Greek.

I ſwear the Laocoon is not ſo fine:
Had I choice of the two, this, I'm clear, would be mine.
The ſubject more pleaſing!—expreſſion ſtill higher!—
This long-hidden treaſure where could you acquire?

MR. BERIL.

I owe it to chance, to acknowledge the truth,
And a princely and brave Neapolitan youth,
Whom I luckily ſav'd, in a villainous ſtrife,
From the dagger of jealouſy, aim'd at his life.
The work was dug up on his father's eſtate,
And, knowing my paſſion for marble is great,
He nobly has ſent me the gift in your view,
In return for what accident led me to do.

LORD SEEWELL.

'Tis the firſt piece of ſculpture perhaps on the earth,
And I hardly know how to appreciate its worth;
But if ever you wiſh to diſpoſe of the treaſure,
I'll accept it at three thouſand guineas with pleaſure.

MR. BERIL.

My Lord, you now ſpeak with that liberal ſpirit
Which you ever diſplay when you eſtimate merit.

Tho'

Tho' I own works of art, of ſuch high eſtimation,
Seem but ill to agree with my fortune and ſtation,
Yet theſe figures at preſent I wiſh to retain,
Tho' the wiſh may appear oſtentatious and vain.
But, my Lord, if they e'er change their maſter anew,
They ſhall find a more worthy poſſeſſor in you.

LADY HARRIOT.

Well! ye dear connoiſſeurs! you amaze me, I own,
By the value you ſet on this ſorrowful ſtone.
I indeed can believe 'tis a fine piece of art;
But to buy it for furniture!—as to my part,
I'd as ſoon o'er my houſe throw a ſepulchre's gloom,
And purchaſe from Weſtminſter-Abbey a tomb.

LORD SEEWELL.

You're a wild idle gipſy, and paſt all correcting;
You have not the leaſt reliſh for what is affecting.

LADY HARRIOT.

That's your fault, dear Papa;—but my ſiſter, you ſee,
Makes ample amends for this failing in me;
She gazes, like you, with ſuch ſerious delight,
That ſhe's half turn'd to marble herſelf by the ſight:

I vow it has made her unable to ſpeak,
And has drawn a cold tear down her petrified cheek.

LADY FRANCES.

Pray! my dear, don't expoſe me!

MR. BERIL.

O ſeek not to hide
What nature deſign'd your chief beauty and pride!—
With different charms ſhe enriches the earth;
To your ſiſter ſhe gave the ſweet dimples of mirth;
And, that each in her province no rival may find,
All the ſoft penſive graces to you ſhe aſſign'd.

LADY HARRIOT.

Believe me, you ſhine, Mr. Beriſ, moſt brightly,
In the delicate ſcience of praiſing politely;
In which many beaux are ſo ſavagely ſtupid,
They a ſcalping-knife take for the weapon of Cupid;
And to tickle one nymph, baſely ſlaſh every other.—
Well! dear Frances, how are you?

LADY FRANCES.

Indeed I can't ſmother,
What I feel in ſurveying this wonder of art;
It has ſomething which takes ſuch faſt hold of the heart.

In the faint dying wife ſuch a fond reſignation!
In the poor widow'd huſband ſuch wild agitation!
Such ſorrow! ſuch anguiſh! ſuch love to Alceſtis!

LADY HARRIOT.

That is true; but I know the whole ſtory a jeſt is;
And Admetus, I think, ſuch a ſhuffling poltroon,
That he moves me no more than the man in the moon.
A pitiful fellow! to live, in his caſe,
And let his poor wife paſs the Styx in his place!
Modern huſbands, indeed, I believe would be merry,
If their wives in their ſtead would croſs over that ferry.

MR. BERIL.

But perhaps, Ma'am, you think that no huſband could find
A young modern wife of Alceſtis's mind?

LADY HARRIOT.

No! indeed, my good Sir!—Here's my dear ſiſter Fan,
She'd be willing to die, to preſerve her good man;
But I own for myſelf, I ſhould doubt and demur,
If I thought my ſpouſe wiſh'd his own trip to defer:
Tho' myſelf to his fortunes I'd freely devote,
If we both might embark at one time in the boat,
I confeſs

I confeſs I ſhould ſcarce be ſo wondrouſly kind,
As to ſet ſail myſelf, but to leave him behind.

HARRY *(entering.)*

Two gentlemen, Sir, wiſh to ſee you below;
Mr. Careleſs is one.

LORD SEEWELL *(to* Mr. Beril.*)*

Harriot's favourite beau!

LADY HARRIOT.

Lord, Papa! Mr. Beril will think me in love.

MR. BERIL *(to* Harry.*)*

Let the gentlemen know we expect them above.

[*Exit* Harry.

LORD SEEWELL.

Tom and Harriot have long had flirtations together,
But their courtſhip has changeable fits, like the weather:
The improvident girl, thinking lovers are plenty,
Declares ſhe won't wed till ſhe's paſt one-and-twenty;
Nor e'en then take her beau, (in her charms ſuch her truſt is)
Unleſs he bids fair to become a chief juſtice;
And Tom is the heir of too large an eſtate,
To load his gay ſpirit with law's heavy weight.

But

But here comes our young lawyer, to urge his own plea!

Enter Careleſs *and* Mr. Cycle.

MR. BERIL.

My dear Tom! how d'ye do?—My good ſtars! can it be?
Is it you, my dear Cycle, my long-abſent friend?

MR. CYCLE.

And ſtill heartily yours.

MR. BERIL.

But why would you not ſend,
And of your affection afford me a proof,
By beſpeaking your quarters here under my roof.
However, I'm happy, that chance is ſo kind,
As to give me th' occaſion I've long wiſh'd to find,
To preſent you to one, who, of all men on earth,
Is moſt able to judge of your genius and worth.—
My dear Lord, to your notice now let me commend
The man to whoſe name you're already a friend!
Behold Mr. Cycle!

LORD SEEWELL.

Dear Sir, let me ſay,
That I often have wiſh'd for this fortunate day,

Which makes me acquainted with one whom I deem
So juſtly entitled to public eſteem;
Whoſe writings and life ſhew in faireſt alliance,
Philanthropical virtue and genuine ſcience.

MR. CYCLE.

My good Lord, theſe are honours far more than my due,
Yet I own with delight I receive them from you;
As you're led to o'er-rate my poor merits, I feel,
By this dear partial friend's kind affectionate zeal.

LORD SEEWELL.

He indeed is your friend—I regard his applauſe;
But to wiſh your acquaintance I've ſtill higher cauſe.
Be aſſur'd I ſhall think myſelf truly your debtor,
If you'll give me the pleaſure of knowing you better.
Either Beril or Careleſs will guide you to me;
I have ſome things perhaps it may pleaſe you to ſee:
Yet no gem, I believe, that's ſo worthy your ſight,
As a ſtatue which Beril has juſt brought to light.
Allow me to ſhew it you—

MR. BERIL (*to* Lady Frances.)

Your tender breaſt,
My dear Lady Frances, I fear, is oppreſt

By

By this ſculptur'd diſtreſs, the mere creature of art,
Yet too painful a ſcene for ſo feeling a heart.

LADY FRANCES.

No, indeed!—at firſt ſight, tho' it made my veins thrill,
And I felt thro' my boſom a cold icy chill,
That impreſſion once over, I view it again
With a ſoothing delight, unembitter'd by pain.

LADY HARRIOT *(to* Careleſs.)

And pray, Sir, from *which* court of juſtice come you?

CARELESS.

From the worſhipful court of wiſe Madam Bijou;
Where, blind as old Themis, ſhe utters decrees
On the price of ſtuff'd parrots and petrified trees.

LADY HARRIOT.

O you miſchievous creature! you certainly mean,
By the ſound of her name to awaken my ſpleen:
You know that the thought of her ſickens me quite,
And that I at her houſe muſt do penance to-night.

CARELESS.

Then I vow I'll be there, if it's only to ſee
How Mortification and you may agree:

Even that gloomy ſpright muſt appear with ſome grace,
If it lurks in the lines of ſo lively a face.

LADY HARRIOT.

All my gaiety dies when her preſence I come in;
No cramp-fiſh could give me a ſhock ſo benumbing—
She's my utter averſion— .

LORD SEEWELL.

Pray tell me, my dear,
Of whom do you ſpeak in a ſtyle ſo ſevere?

LADY HARRIOT.

Of your friend, dear Papa, your good Mrs. Bijou.

LORD SEEWELL.

That's ungrateful, dear Harriot—ſhe's civil to you;
And you ſhould not indulge a ſatyrical vein.

LADY HARRIOT.

You forget, my dear Sir, how you often complain
That her low little pride, and nonſenſical whim,
Have reduc'd your old friend to a pitiful trim;
And I think ſhe has made him ſo gloomy a ſlave,
She has pent her good man in Trophonius' cave.
Such to him was the temple of Hymen; for after
He enter'd its veſtibule,—farewell to laughter.

LORD SPEWELL.

Why, Harriot! you really are quite acrimonious:
But if you call wedlock the cave of Trophonius,
Have a care, if that cavern you chance to ſtep near!
You love laughing too well to reſign it, my dear.

LADY HARRIOT.

And therefore, tho' woo'd like the nymph of Toboſo,
I never will marry an old virtuoſo,
Who thinks himſelf bleſt with taſte, ſcience, and worth,
Becauſe he picks up all the odd things on earth.—
When a paſſion for art, or for nature, is join'd
With a warm friendly heart, and a liberal mind,
I reſpect the pure taſte which that union produces,
Free from vanity's ſordid fantaſtic abuſes.
Tho' I do not poſſeſs it, I ſee and commend
Such taſte, dear Papa, both in you and your friend;
But I view with an utter contempt, I confeſs,
Thoſe who awkwardly ape what you really poſſeſs:
And for Mrs. Bijou, ſhe has juſt as much ſoul
As a monkey, who carries queer things to its hole:
She with wonderful guſto, half Gothic, half Dutch,
Like an old ſquirrel, hides all ſhe can in her hutch.

CARELESS.

CARELESS.

An excellent portrait! and true, I proteſt,
For I've juſt had a peep at the old ſquirrel's neſt.

LADY HARRIOT.

Pray, ſince we together her cloſet inſpected,
What whimſical rarities has ſhe collected?

CARELESS.

O, before I could count half the baubles ſhe buys,
I could tell you the name of each ſtar in the ſhies:
Her ſphere is too wide for my genius to ſcan it;
But I know what ſhe reckons her Georgian planet,
Her newly-found ſtar—which to-night, if you're free,
Thro' a glaſs ſhe perhaps may allow you to ſee.

LADY HARRIOT.

What wonder is this?—is it fleſh, fiſh, or fowl?
A Lilliput dog? or a Brobdignag owl?
Or is it a remnant from Joſeph's odd coat?

CARELESS.

It is ſomething once held by a perſon of note
In our iſland; and now I defy you to gueſs.

LADY HARRIOT.

Is it Eſſex's ring? or the ruff of Queen Beſs?

Or Alfred's cake-toaſter? or Rizzio's fiddle?
Pray tell me!—I hate to be teaz'd by a riddle.

CARELESS.

In ſhort, 'tis a night-cap, not worth half a groat,
Which ſhe for a guinea has luckily bought;
Becauſe this old fragment of worſted, ſhe vows,
Once ſerv'd as a crown for poor Chatterton's brows:
Tho' I think we ſhould find, if we knew the whole truth,
That the cap was ne'er ſeen by that wonderful youth.

LADY HARRIOT.

Now, Chatterton! I boaſt, that thy ill-fated verſe
Can teach antiquarians to open their purſe!
Yet hadſt thou, in miſery, ſu'd for that guinea,
Its miſtreſs had call'd thee a vain rhyming ninny;
And prov'd, to thy grief, by the ſtyle of her giving,
Virtuoſo's have little eſteem for the living.

LORD SEEWELL.

Come, Harriot! I *muſt* ſtop the tide of your wit,
Tho' you're now on a topic you don't love to quit.
(*To* Mr. Beril.)
We *muſt* take our leave—Many thanks for our plea-
ſure.—
Mr. Cycle, remember!—your firſt day of leiſure!—

You

You ſha'n't ſtir, my dear Beril, you ſha'n't leave your friend;
Here is Careleſs, you know, on the girls to attend.
Let us ſee you together, and ſhortly!—Adieu!

LADY HARRIOT *(to* Careleſs, *aſide.)*

Below let me whiſper a few words to you!

Mr. Beril *and* Mr. Cycle.

MR. BERIL.

Well, my worthy old friend, I rejoice you are here,
And that now you are known to that excellent peer;
Who, free from all pride, affectation, and vanity,
Unites uſeful virtue to pleaſing urbanity;
Plain, ſimple, ſincere, yet of judgment refin'd,
And fond of the arts, as they're friends to mankind;
Ennobled much leſs by his birth than his ſpirit,
The model of Honor, and patron of Merit!
But how have you done for this age? and what plan,
For the profit of ſcience, or ſervice of man,
Brings you now from your fav'rite ſequeſter'd retreat?
Whate'er the occaſion, I'm glad that we meet;
Tho' I meant to be with you ere next ſummer's ſun.

MR. CYCLE.

I know, my dear Beril, that you are not one

Whoſe

Whoſe welcome will ſuddenly ſink into ſorrow,
When I tell you, I now viſit London to borrow.

MR. BERIL.

If I'm able to levy the ſum you require,
The world can ſcarce give me a pleaſure much higher,
Than that of aſſiſting a friend, to whoſe mind
I have infinite debts of a far deeper kind.
I can never forget what I owe to your care,
In the frenzy of deſolate love and deſpair;
When my reaſon had yielded to paſſion's wild ſtrife,
Your friendſhip alone reconcil'd me to life.
But tell me, dear Cycle, what ſum will ſuffice?

MR. CYCLE.

You muſt know, I have lately been led to deviſe
A ſcheme for the poor—

MR. BERIL.

My dear friend, at your leiſure
I'll hear your benevolent projects with pleaſure;
But farther diſcourſe you muſt let me prevent,
On the ſource of your wants, till I know their extent;
For indeed I can't reſt, till I'm happily ſure
That whatever you wiſh I have means to procure.

MR. CYCLE.

Not to keep you in doubt, then, my dear ardent friend,
Two thouſand, I fancy, will anſwer my end:
The one I am promis'd to-day from Bijou;
For the other, I own, I've depended on you.

MR. BERIL.

And why not allow me to furniſh the whole?—
Poor Bijou has a wife with no liberal ſoul;
If any demur in that quarter you ſee,
I entreat you to take all you wiſh for of me.
But of this more anon—here is Careleſs return'd.

Mr. Beril, Mr. Cycle, *and* Careleſs.

CARELESS.

Well! my worthy philoſopher, a'n't you concern'd
To find our friend ſtill unſupply'd with a wife,
Thus form'd as he is for the conjugal life?
As you're fond of new ſchemes for the good of the nation,
I'll recommend one to your conſideration;
To revive wedded love, that old, obſolete paſſion,
And bring honeſt Hymen again into faſhion!

MR.

MR. CYCLE.

In truth, my dear Tom, I am quite of your mind,
There is no better ſcheme for the good of mankind;
And nothing, I know, that could give it more weight,
Than the grace which our friend would beſtow on that ſtate.

MR. BERIL.

You are merry, good friends!—I ſubſcribe to your joke—
My gravity 's fit for the conjugal yoke!

CARELESS.

I am ſerious, indeed, and have often declar'd,
That had I a ſiſter, for wedlock prepar'd,
Of all men in the world, if you'd deign to embrace her,
In your arms it would make me moſt happy to place her.
But you're courted too much to be eaſily won;
He, whom many are fond of, can fix upon none.

MR. BERIL.

Indeed, my dear Tom, you are wrong on this theme.—
In return for a proof of your cordial eſteem,
I'll tell you the reaſon, with frankneſs and truth,
Why no nymph has ſupply'd the loſt love of my youth:

There is one, whoſe mild virtue and elegant grace,
The dear girl I deplore in my heart might replace;
But my fortune's too humble for her rank of life,
Tho' ſhe may be *your ſiſter*, ſhe can't be *my wife*.

CARELESS.

Would you wed Lady Frances?

MR. CYCLE.

The lady I've ſeen?—
She is like poor Sophia in features and mien.

MR. BERIL.

You are right, my dear friend;—it was that very thought
Led my heart to attach itſelf more than it ought:
But my reaſon conſiders her rank and her ſtation,
And forbids me to form any raſh expectation.
Nor would I attempt to engage her affection,
Without the leaſt hope of our happy connection.

CARELESS.

More honor than foreſight you ſhew by this ſtrain.
Be bold!—there is nothing *you* may not attain.—
More of this when we meet!—I muſt now ſay adieu.

MR. CYCLE.

So muſt I—for you know my appointment at two.

MR. BERIL.

But I hope, my good friends, you will both dine with me.

MR. CYCLE.

For myſelf, I'll return to you ſoon after three.

CARELESS.

I am griev'd to refuſe ſuch a frank invitation:
But to tell you the truth—I've a kind aſſignation.

MR. BERIL.

Love and pleaſure attend you!

CARELESS.

Dear Beril, adieu!
Let us all meet to-night at the houſe of Bijou!

[*Exeunt.*

The Drawing Room of Mrs. Bijou.

MRS. BIJOU *(ſpeaking as ſhe enters.)*

Look over the ſtair-caſe! and tell me who knocks!

JOAN *(entering.)*

Mr. Varniſh is come, with a thing in a box.

MRS. BIJOU.

A thing in a box!—You're a horrible Goth:
But as you're to leave me, I'll ſtifle my wrath.

'Tis

'Tis a picture, you oaf!—bid him bring it to me.

[*Exit* Joan.

Some cabinet jewel I now hope to ſee.
This intelligent Varniſh my patronage courts,
And I get the firſt peep at whate'er he imports.

Mrs. Bijou *and* Mr. Varniſh.

MRS. BIJOU.

Well, Varniſh!

MR. VARNISH.

Dear Madam, with moſt humble duty,
I have brought you a gem of unparagon'd beauty.

MRS. BIJOU.

Good Varniſh! what is it?

MR. VARNISH.

An exquiſite Titian.
You never ſaw one in ſuch brilliant condition.

MRS. BIJOU.

And what is the ſubject?

MR. VARNISH *(opening the Caſe.)*

Now, Ma'am, I'll diſplay it.—
Here's a feaſt for the eye that knows how to ſurvey it!

Here's

Here's a Joſeph!—I ne'er ſaw his like in my life.
And pray, Ma'am, obſerve what a Potiphar's wife!
How chaſte the deſign! yet the colours how warm!
What tints in each face! and what life in each form!
Pray! Madam, remark how he ſtruggles to fly!
We hear him exclaiming, "No, Miſtreſs! not I!"

MRS. BIJOU.

It ſeems very fine, and has ſtriking expreſſion.—
Was it ever in any great perſon's poſſeſſion?

MR. VARNISH.

Not a ſoul here has ſeen it, except a poor Peer,
For whom it was bought:—but, alas! 'twas too dear.
His ſteward, my friend——but I muſt not be raſh,
And betray a good Earl, with more guſto than caſh.—
Our Lords are all poor, and ſo ruin'd my trade is,
I ſhould ſtarve, were it not for you well-judging ladies.
There's my old Lady Ogle-nud, had ſhe a peep,
Would certainly buy it before ſhe would ſleep:
But having receiv'd many favours from you,
I made it a point you ſhould have the firſt view.

MRS. BIJOU.

I thank you, good Varniſh.—But what is the price?

MR. VARNISH.

She'd give me a thouſand, I know, in a trice,
And buy ſome companions beſides, if I had 'em;
But I'll leave it with you for eight hundred, dear Madam.

MRS. BIJOU.

Eight hundred!—Sure, Varniſh, that ſum is too much.

MR. VARNISH.

Dear Madam, obſerve what a delicate touch!
See how finely 'tis pencil'd! and what preſervation!
There is not, I know, ſuch a gem in the nation;
And Italy has not a brighter, I'm ſure.
The figures ſo glowing! the ſtory ſo pure!—
Good ladies would never have wandering ſpouſes,
If they'd only hang ſubjects like this in their houſes.

MRS. BIJOU.

I proteſt, your remark is ingenious and new:
You have guſto in Morals as well as Virtù.

MR. VARNISH *(aſide.)*

I have hopes that my hint will aſſiſt our tranſaction,
For the old dame is jealous, they ſay, to diſtraction.

MRS.

MRS. BIJOU.

Well! I own, Mr. Varniſh, your picture is fine.—
If my huſband is rich, it ſhall quickly be mine.
Here he comes to decide it.

Enter Mr. Bijou.

MRS. BIJOU.

My dear, here's a ſight!
You are luckily come to complete my delight.
Mr. Varniſh has been ſo exceedingly kind,
As he knows on a Titian I've long ſet my mind,
To bring me the fineſt I ever ſurvey'd:
And as we have often befriended his trade,
He offers to leave it a bargain with us.

MR. BIJOU.

Its merit or price it is vain to diſcuſs:
Tho' the picture poſſeſſes ſo tempting an air,
At preſent, my dear, I've no money to ſpare.

MRS. BIJOU.

Mr. Varniſh, pray ſtep in the parlour below!
Our final reſolve you ſhall preſently know.

MR. VARNISH.

Dear Madam, for hours I'll wait on your pleaſure;
And I beg you will note all its beauties at leiſure.

(Aſide, as he goes out.)

Now ſucceſs to the ſex!—Be this ſtruggle more glorious!
May the Joſeph be kind! and the Lady victorious!

MRS. BIJOU.

My deareſt, you'll not let the picture depart,
When you ſee it has taken ſuch hold on my heart!—
I really can't reſt, till a Titian we've got,
That *we* may have ſomething Lord Seewell has *not*.
And as we expect him, you know, here to-night,
I would ſhew him this piece with triumphant delight.

MR. BIJOU.

I love to indulge all your wiſhes, my dear;
But I'm quite out of caſh.

MRS. BIJOU.

Nay! Bijou! I am clear
You have now all I want in your pocket.—Come! come!
I know you went out to receive a large ſum;

And

And ſtill have it about you.—I vow I will look.—
Here it is!—here are notes in this little red book.
[*Takes out his Pocket-Book.*

MR. BIJOU.

Indeed, I muſt beg you that book to releaſe!

MRS. BIJOU.

Here are ten, I declare, of an hundred apiece!—
I'll take juſt enough, and reſtore you the reſt.

MR. BIJOU.

I can't ſuffer this freedom, my dear, I proteſt;
For the notes are not mine, they belong to a friend.

MRS. BIJOU.

To a friend!—O! I gueſs, Sir, to whom you would lend.
Your ſly-looking gueſt, Mr. Cycle 's the man;
I know he was here on a borrowing plan.
Throw your thouſand away on a charity bubble!
And leave your poor wife to vexation and trouble!

MR. BIJOU.

Nay! my dear, be not vex'd!—you have miſunderſtood:
The ſum will be ſafe, and the intereſt good.

MRS. BIJOU.

And what is the pitiful profit you'll raiſe,
Compar'd to the tranſport with which we ſhould gaze
On the picture my fondneſs would have you poſſeſs,
For reaſons the pureſt that wife can profeſs?
Unkind as you are!—I have reaſons above
Even profit and pleaſure——the reaſons of love.
'Tis my aim, by this modeſt production of art,
To ſtrengthen your virtue and chaſten your heart.
If you daily ſurvey an example ſo bright,
This model of continence ever in ſight,
No naughty young women will tempt you to wander,
But your truth and your love will grow firmer and fonder.

MR. BIJOU.

What a tender idea!—how virtuouſly kind!
What affection and taſte! by each other refin'd!

MRS. BIJOU.

But if for a poor and a fooliſh projector,
You can thwart a fond wife, can afflict and neglect her—
Go! go! I ſhall weep, while abroad you may roam,
That your charity has no beginning at home.

MR. BIJOU.

It begins, and ſhall end there.—I'm melted, my dear!—
You may keep all the notes!—Let me kiſs off that tear!

MRS. BIJOU.

Now again you're my own, dear, delightful Bijou!
And the Titian is mine, and my love will be true!

[*Exit in great haſte.*

MR. BIJOU *(alone.)*

Such virtuous endearments what heart could reſiſt?
Yet I fear by poor Cycle this ſum will be miſs'd.
And what ſhall I ſay for the failure?—In ſooth,
I think 'twill be faireſt to tell him the truth:
And, ſage as he is, he perhaps too has felt
That gold, at the breath of a woman, will melt.—
As I live, here he is! and I look rather ſmall,
With a pocket ſo empty, to anſwer his call.

Enter Mr. Cycle.

MR. BIJOU.

Mr. Cycle, you're come, and I'm really confus'd;
But I know the miſchance will by you be excus'd.

In

In notes I had got you the thouſand complete,
They were all in this pocket——

MR. CYCLE.

The thieves of the ſtreet
Have not pick'd it, I hope, in the buſtle of ſtrife?

MR. BIJOU.

It was pick'd, I confeſs, by the hand of my wife;
But for reaſons ſo pure, in ſo tender a mode——

MR. CYCLE.

I am happy the ſum is ſo juſtly beſtow'd.

MR. BIJOU.

I know you'll forgive, when I come to explain.

MR. CYCLE.

Dear Bijou! let me ſave you at once from that pain;
And aſſure you, with truth, that I now really come
As ready to quit, as to take up the ſum;
Since Beril's ſo kind, that, without my deſire,
He has offer'd me all that my wants can require.

MR. BIJOU.

I proteſt, I am glad you have found ſuch a friend;
But if you hereafter ſhould wiſh me to lend,

 I beg

I beg you will call without ſcruple on me.—
Your worthy friend Beril to-night we ſhall ſee;
And Seewell, in guſto the firſt of our Earls,
Will be here with his daughters, two delicate girls!
To prove, my good friend, your forgiveneſs is hearty,
Let me hope you will kindly make one of the party!

MR. CYCLE.

Moſt chearfully!

MR. BIJOU.

Well!—I am griev'd, I muſt ſay,
That I cannot detain you to dinner to-day;
But to tell you the truth, when for theſe gala nights
My wife is preparing to ſhew her fine ſights,
She ſpends ſo much time in adjuſting her ſhelves,
That we take a cold ſnap in the kitchen ourſelves.
So I'm ſure you'll excuſe it.

MR. CYCLE.

Your reaſon is ſtrong;
And I'm ſorry, my friend, I've intruded ſo long.

MR.

MR. BIJOU.

We have time enough yet—do not hurry away!

MR. CYCLE.

It really grows late.

MR. BIJOU.

I won't preſs you to ſtay,
As at night o'er our concert you'll come to preſide.—
I am heartily glad all your wants are ſupply'd.

MR. CYCLE.

Indeed, I believe you, my honeſt Bijou!
So, till night, fare you well!

MR. BIJOU.

My dear Cycle, adieu!

End of ACT II.

ACT

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Lord Seewell *and* Lady Harriot.

LADY HARRIOT.

DEAR Papa, don't betray me!—her delicate mind
Would be wounded, I know, and would think me unkind:
So far from allowing, what now I impart,
She herſelf little knows the true ſtate of her heart.

LORD SEEWELL.

Believe me, my dear, I with pleaſure ſurvey
The ſiſterly fondneſs you warmly diſplay.
But you, who for others ſo ſenſibly feel,
May here be the dupe of affectionate zeal;
And I hope you're miſtaken.

LADY HARRIOT.

My dear Sir, obſerve!
You may trace her attachment in every nerve:

If I name Mr. Beril in ſome idle tale,
Poor Fanny will bluſh, and as often turn pale.
In his abſence ſtill more and more penſive ſhe grows,
Yet thinks not from whence her uneaſineſs flows.
And when he returns, tho' her pleaſure is meek,
Yet the glow of content may be ſeen on her cheek;
And her heart, as if fully conſol'd by his ſight,
Appears to repoſe in a tranquil delight.
Dear Papa, you'll perceive, if you'll open your eyes,
That from none but herſelf ſhe her love can diſguiſe.
One other exception perhaps we may find,
As I think Mr. Beril is equally blind,
And robb'd, like herſelf, of the talent of ſeeing,
By that diffident love, which denies it own being.

LORD SEEWELL.

I hope this attachment, which neither has ſhewn,
Exiſts, my good girl, in your fancy alone.

LADY HARRIOT.

Why ſo, my dear Sir?—Should it prove, as you fear,
I hope, dear Papa, that you won't be ſevere.
Conſider the delicate frame of my ſiſter!
But I know you've a heart that can never reſiſt her,

If you once clearly ſee ſhe has fixt her affection,
Tho' ſhe own not her wiſhes for ſuch a connection;
As you know that her nature's ſo modeſt and meek,
She would die from concealment before ſhe would ſpeak.
I have ſtrength to encounter the croſſes of life,
And to make my part good, as a daughter or wife:
But our gentle ſweet Frances is ill-form'd to bear
The undeſerv'd load of vexation and care;
And therefore ſhould wed, unregardful of pelf,
A huſband as tender and mild as herſelf.

LORD SEEWELL.

Your reaſoning, I think, is not perfectly juſt.
In the kindneſs of Beril perhaps I might truſt;
But the motive you urge for this union, my dear,
Is what, I confeſs, would awaken my fear.
As you ſay, your mild ſiſter ſhould never be harraſs'd
By thoſe various ills with which life is embarraſs'd,
I ſhould guard her from all the vexations that wait
On a liberal mind with a narrow eſtate:
And if Beril had thoughts of becoming my ſon,
Had I *not* more objections, yet this muſt be one.

LADY HARRIOT.

I'll remove it, my Lord, for indeed this is all:
As you think they 'll be pinch'd by an income too ſmall,
You ſhall add to their fortune, and large it will be,
Two thirds of the portion you've deſtin'd for me.

LORD SERWELL.

Dear Harriot! I'm charm'd with thy ſoul, I confeſs;
Thou'rt a generous girl—to a noble exceſs.

LADY HARRIOT.

To that name, dear Papa, I've no title, indeed,
As I only give up what I never can need.
In your houſe all my wants will, I know, be ſupply'd;
And if I ſhould leave it, as Careleſs's bride,
The liberal heir of ſo large an eſtate
Will not grieve that my fortune has ſunk in its weight.
Or ſhould my ſwain frown at the change in my purſe,
He may e'en take old Themis for better for worſe;
For tho', I confeſs, he has won my regard,
Yet the knot of my love is not twiſted ſo hard,
But 'twill ſlip in a moment, if ever I ſee
That he's rather more fond of my purſe than of me.

LORD SEEWELL.

'Tis a pity, the friendly illuſions of youth
Cannot inſtantly turn into ſubſtance and truth.
Your affectionate fancy, my dear, is delighted
With the dream of beholding two perſons united,
Whom you fondly ſuppoſe only form'd for each other.

LADY HARRIOT.

I ſhould like Mr. Beril, I own, for my brother,
Becauſe I'm convinc'd, that no mortal on earth,
In manners, in temper, in taſte, and in worth,
Is form'd ſo exactly to ſuit ſuch a wife.
On their laſting attachment I'd venture my life.

LORD SEEWELL.

Your warm heart, my good girl, your young judgment deceives,
And what the firſt wiſhes the ſecond believes.
Dear Harriot, to *this* fancied match there may be
Many bars, which your eyes are unable to ſee:
A miſtreſs conceal'd with a young little fry—

LADY HARRIOT.

Should an angel declare it, the fact I'd deny;

For had Beril been loaded with ſuch a connection,
In his eyes I had never perceiv'd his affection.
But I'll preſently ſolve any doubts of this kind,
As I'm ſoon to be told the true ſtate of his mind;
For Careleſs has promis'd——

LORD SEEWELL.

O fie! my dear, fie!
Your intemperate zeal has now riſen too high.
I am really concern'd at your great indiſcretion.

LADY HARRIOT.

Nay! but hear me, my Lord!—I have dropt no expreſſion,
No! not one ſingle hint, that could truly diſcover
Why in ſuch a reſearch I commiſſion'd my lover!
Don't think, dear Papa, I'd my ſiſter betray!——

Enter a Servant.

SERVANT.

Mr. Beril, my Lord, ſent this letter.

LORD SEEWELL.

Stay! ſtay!

Does

Does any one wait for an anſwer below?

SERVANT.

No, my Lord, the man's gone.

LORD SEEWELL.

Very well! you may go!

[*Exit* Servant.

LADY HARRIOT.

Should this be an offer!—'twould give me great pleaſure;
But I fear he's too modeſt to take ſuch a meaſure.—
Dear Papa! does he venture on any advances?

LORD SEEWELL.

There, my dear!—you'll not find any mention of Frances;
And I think by the note, which to you I reſign,
Your conjectures are not ſo well founded as mine.

LADY HARRIOT *(peruſing the Letter.)*

"Occaſion for money."——"The ſtatue to you!"——
I'm amaz'd—and can hardly believe it is true.
He never would part with ſo dear a poſſeſſion,
But for ſome urgent reaſon.

LORD SEEWELL.

You ſee his confeſſion:

His

His ſtrong call for money is frankly declar'd;
And I fear his ſmall fortune is greatly impair'd.

LADY HARRIOT.

Theſe tidings, indeed, give me real concern:
But the ſource of this ſtep I will ſpeedily learn.
Careleſs ſoon will be here.—I will make him diſcover;
And till we know all, give no peace to my lover.—
But now, my dear Lord, by this note you may find,
How the heart of my ſiſter is really inclin'd:
I'm convinc'd this will prove her affection is ſtrong.
Here ſhe comes for the trial—pray ſee if I'm wrong.

LORD SEEWELL.

Well, my dear, I will try, by an innocent plot,
If your ſiſter has really this paſſion or not.

Enter Lady Frances.

LORD SEEWELL.

Dear Fanny, you're come our concern to partake,
For we both are much griev'd for our friend Beril's ſake.

LADY FRANCES.

Mr. Beril! dear Sir,—Is he hurt?—Is he kill'd?

LORD SEEWELL.

No!—with terrors too lively your boſom is fill'd.

My dear, how you tremble!—But I was to blame,
To raiſe this alarm in your delicate frame.
He is well; but ſome croſſes of fortune, I fear,
Make him ſell what he juſtly conſider'd ſo dear.
You will ſee by this letter.—(*Aſide, to* Lady Harriot.) Ah,
Harriot, 'tis ſo;
The exceſs of her fear from affection muſt flow!

LADY FRANCES.

How painful to him muſt the exigence be,
Which extorts from his hand the agreement I ſee!
How cruel! for him to relinquiſh a treaſure,
Whence his elegant ſpirit deriv'd ſo much pleaſure!
But I truſt, dear Papa, that your generous mind
Will not now preſs the bargain he once has declin'd;
And, ſcorning to profit by any diſtreſs,
Will not catch at the gem he ſtill ought to poſſeſs.

LORD SEEWELL.

My dear, can I now, what I offer'd, withhold?
And ſhould I, the ſtatue no leſs would be ſold.

LADY FRANCES.

Perhaps, if you choſe half its value to lend,
From ſo galling a ſale you might reſcue your friend!

LORD SEEWELL.

I am pleas'd, my dear girl, with your ſpirit, I own,
But theſe are bad times for a dangerous loan;
And, to tell you the truth in this knotty affair,
I have juſt at this criſis no money to ſpare.
But I'll frankly explain our finances to you,
And you ſhall inſtruct me in what I ſhall do.—
As I've ſeen that old fathers, tho' reckon'd moſt ſage,
Often injure a child by the frolicks of age,
That you may not ſuffer from follies like theſe,
I have juſt now conſign'd to the care of truſtees
All I've ſav'd for you both:—ſo if I prove unſteady,
You are ſafe.—When you wed, both your fortunes are ready.

LADY FRANCES.

How kind, my dear Sir, is whatever you do!
But no child was e'er hurt by a parent like you.

LADY HARRIOT.

I muſt ſmile, dear Papa, at your terrors of ſlipping;
They who take ſuch precautions are ſeldom found tripping.
But if in old age your philoſophy varies,
I proteſt I'll forgive you for any vagaries.

LORD

LORD SEEWELL.

Very well, Madam Harriot! remember your word!
I ſhall claim your indulgence, if e'er I'm abſurd.
But as what I have done our looſe money ſecures,
I no longer can touch what I've firmly made yours.

LADY FRANCES.

Let the fortune of Harriot be ſacred, I pray,
For not very diſtant is her wedding-day.
But as *I* am convinc'd I ſhall not wed at all,
Let my portion, Papa, anſwer every call:
I muſt beg you to look on it ſtill as your own;
And if it may ſerve for ſo timely a loan,
It can't give me more joy, whatſoever my ſtation,
Than by ſaving your friend from ſuch mortification.

LORD SEEWELL.

My dear girls! you are both the delight of my life:
May each warm-hearted daughter be bleſt as a wife!—
What I ſaid was but meant your kind ſpirit to try,
For the wants of our friend I can amply ſupply.
Of eſteem it will pleaſe me to give him a proof,
And preſerve the fine ſtatue ſtill under his roof.

Enter a Servant.

SERVANT.

Mr. Careleſs, my Lord!

LADY HARRIOT.

Now the whole I ſhall know.

[*Going.*

LORD SEEWELL.

Stay!—

SERVANT.

He wiſhes to ſee Lady Harriot below.

LORD SEEWELL.

Being equally anxious this point to diſcover,
We will all, my dear Harriot, attend on your lover.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE, *the Apartments of* Mrs. Bijou.

MR. BIJOU.

Where the deuce is my wife?—All her rarities plac'd!
Her apartments adjuſted with exquiſite taſte!
Some diſaſter has happen'd, or ſhe would be here,
Where ſhe ought to be waiting to welcome the Peer;

And

And I fancy I heard her in anger below.

Enter Mrs. Bijou, *in great Agitation.*

MR. BIJOU.

What's the matter, my love?

MRS. BIJOU.

O, my dear, ſuch a blow!
I really had ſwoon'd, if vexation and wrath
Had not quicken'd my ſpirits, to ſcold at the Goth.
That awkward old Joan!—an unmannerly minx!
Has knock'd off the nipple, my dear, from a Sphinx;
And now on our chimney it cannot be plac'd,
With a wound ſo indelicate maim'd and diſgrac'd.
But I've happily got theſe two Griffins of gold,
In the room of the Sphinxes, our candles to hold.

MR. BIJOU.

My dear, the exchange is moſt lucky and right,
For a Sphinx is an awkward diſpenſer of light;
But whether your Griffin 's of gold or of copper,
A flame from his mouth is exceedingly proper.

MRS. BIJOU.

By your leſſons, my love, I improve in Virtù:
All the guſto I have, I have gather'd from you.—

I have fixt the Great Mummy, my dear, to the wall,
Leſt the pert Lady Harriot ſhould give him a fall:
She'd be glad to throw down my old king, out of ſpite;
And I would not be vext in our triumph to-night.
I know our new picture will ſtir up her gall,
And this Titian will make us the envy of all.
My dear, don't you think it looks well by this light?

MR. BIJOU.

The colours, indeed, are uncommonly bright.

MRS. BIJOU.

What a beautiful youth is this Joſeph!—I ſwear,
I am more and more charm'd with his delicate air;
I delight in him more ſince I've found, dear Bijou,
That in one of his features he's very like you.

MR. BIJOU.

Where can you, my dear, any likeneſs ſuppoſe?

MRS. BIJOU.

I proteſt he has got the true turn of your noſe;
Not the aquiline curve, but a little Socratic:
And his eye flaſhes fire, that is chaſtly ecſtatic.—
There's a rap at our door! and I hope my Lord's come.
If vexation and envy do not ſtrike him dumb,

I think

I think he 'll harangue, like a critic of Greece,
On the exquiſite charms of this beautiful piece!
I long to behold how he 's touch'd by the ſight:
But I know that his envy will ſink his delight.
The moment he ſees it, he 'll think his luck cruel,
In miſſing ſo precious a cabinet jewel.

Enter Mr. Beril *and* Mr. Cycle.

MR. BIJOU.

Dear Cycle, I take this exceedingly kind;
And I hope you've not left your Cremona behind.
In your preſence to-night I moſt truly rejoice,
And ſhall call for the aid of your hand and your voice,
(As my wife gives a ſnug little concert below)
When you've ſeen what her upper apartments can ſhew.

MR. CYCLE.

You may freely command me, my friend, as you pleaſe.

MRS. BIJOU.

You're a judge, Mr. Beril, of treaſures like theſe;
And I'm eager to ſhew you a Titian, that 's new
Since we laſt had the joy of a viſit from you.

MR. BERIL.

The ſtory is told, Ma'am, with ſtriking expreſſion.

MRS. BIJOU.

Don't you envy my huſband this brilliant poſſeſſion?

I thought you'd burſt forth into rapturous praiſe;
But with no keen delight on this picture you gaze!

MR. BERIL.

To confeſs, Ma'am, the truth, I'm a whimſical being,
And a ſubject like this I've no pleaſure in ſeeing.
On *your* lovely ſex 'tis a ſatire moſt bitter,
That ill-nature may laugh at, and levity titter:
But I'm griev'd, when an artiſt has laviſh'd his care
On a ſtory that ſeems a diſgrace to the Fair.

MRS. BIJOU.

Our ſex's chief luſtre, I own, it obſcures:
But think what a leſſon it offers to yours!

Enter Lady Harriot, Lady Frances, Lord Seewell, *and* Mr. Careleſs.

MR. BIJOU.

My dear Lord, I this inſtant was wiſhing for you.
Your voice is deciſive in points of Virtù;
And you're come in the moment to end an odd ſtrife,
In a matter of taſte about Potiphar's wife.—
Should her ſtory be painted?—We want your deciſion;
And here is the picture that caus'd our diviſion.

LORD SEEWELL.

Ha! my poor old acquaintance!—But how, dear Bijou,
How the deuce could this picture find favor with you?

I hope

I hope that rogue Varniſh has play'd you no trick,—
You have paid no great price——

MRS. BIJOU.

I am cut to the quick!
Sure, my Lord, you ne'er look'd on this picture before?

LORD SEEWELL.

Dear Madam! 'tis one that I turn'd out of door;
And, as I may aid you to 'ſcape from a fraud,
I'll proceed to inform you, I bought it abroad,
To relieve the diſtreſs of an indigent youth,
Who copied old Maſters with ſpirit and truth;
And when it came home, as I valu'd it not,
My ſteward, by chance, this gay furniture got.
To a new houſe of his it has lately been carried;
And as your friend Varniſh his daughter has married,
I ſuppoſe the ſly rogue by this picture has try'd,
To encreaſe the ſmall fortune he gain'd with his bride.
Search the garment of Joſeph! you'll find on its hem,
And within a dark fold, the two letters T. M.

MRS. BIJOU.

Aye! there is the mark!—we are cheated, we're plunder'd.
That infamous villain, to aſk me eight hundred!—

But the law ſhall reſtore it.

MR. BIJOU.

See! Mrs. Bijou,
See the fruits of my haſty indulgence to you!

LORD SEEWELL.

Chear up, my old friend!—'Tis my wiſh, that this night
May be witneſs to nothing but peace and delight.
I'll engage to make Varniſh your money reſtore;
And perhaps this adventure may ſave you much more.
All we old connoiſſeurs, if the truth we would own,
Have, at times, been outwitted with canvaſs or ſtone:
But here's one, whoſe example our tribe now invites
To correct our miſtakes, and improve our delights.
Here's Beril, tho' bleſt with a treaſure moſt rare,
That with few works of art will admit of compare,
Gives up the proud joys, that on ſuch wealth attend,
For the nobler delight of aſſiſting a friend!

MR. BERIL.

My Lord! you amaze me; how could you divine?—
O, Careleſs! your zeal has betray'd my deſign.

LORD SEEWELL.

You have fixt on the traitor, yet are not aware;
That you're almoſt involv'd in a dangerous ſnare:

But I'll ſhew you this traitor's accomplice, my friend,
And tell you what miſchief theſe plotters intend.
You muſt know, Tom and Harriot in concert purſue
Their dark machinations 'gainſt Frances and you:
They have ſworn you've a tender eſteem for each other,
Which you both have in modeſty labour'd to ſmother.
If their charge can be prov'd, I your freedom reſtrain,
And ſentence you both to the conjugal chain.

MR. BERIL.

O, my Lord! that I love Lady Frances, is true;
Yet I could not avow it to her, or to you:
But to force my confeſſion, ſuch means you employ,
I almoſt may call them the torture of joy.
I'm o'erwhelm'd with ſurprize, with delight, and with dread,
Leſt I falſely have heard the kind things you have ſaid.
Speak! my dear Lady Frances, my anguiſh relieve!
Does this tumult of hope my wild fancy deceive?

LADY FRANCES.

I ſo long have my father's indulgence confeſt,
That againſt his decrees I ſhall never proteſt.

MR. BERIL.

O, how ſhall I thank thee, dear pride of my life!

LORD SEEWELL.

By cheriſhing ſtill in the mind of your wife,
Such generous feelings as *you* have diſplay'd.—
From my hand, my dear Beril, receive the kind maid!
Your ſtatue is not more indebted to art,
Than ſhe is to nature for molding her heart.
They both ſhall be yours; both the ſtatue and bride!
And the wants of your friend ſhall no leſs be ſupply'd.—
Being free from one modiſh and wealth-waſting vice,
From thoſe peſts of our order, the turf and the dice,
I enjoy, my dear children, the fortunate power,
Of ſecuring your bliſs by an affluent dower.
Your quiet ſhall ne'er by your income be hurt,
Which ſhall equal your wiſh, tho' below your deſert.

MR. BERIL.

Of your kindneſs, my Lord, I ſo feel the exceſs,
That my voice cannot ſpeak what my heart would expreſs.

MR.

MR. BIJOU.

I am charm'd, my dear Lord, by your choice of a ſon.

LORD SEEWELL.

I know, my old friend, you'll approve what I've done.
You and I, dear Bijou, wanting proper correction,
Have on vanity laviſh'd the dues of affection.
We have both ſquander'd caſh on too many a whim;
But in taſte let us take a new leſſon from him!
And rate our improvements in real Virtù,
By the generous acts he may teach us to do!
To remember this truth is the connoiſſeur's duty;
"A benevolent deed is the eſſence of beauty."

MR. BIJOU.

I confeſs, I too oft have been vanity's fool;
But ſhall hope to grow wiſe, my good Lord, in your ſchool.
And, as mirth ſhould be coupled with wiſdom, I'll go
And ſee if the fiddles are ready below. [*Exit.*

LORD SEEWELL.

To-night, my dear Madam, you muſt not look grave;
Tho' Varniſh has prov'd ſuch an impudent knave,

I promiſe to make him your money refund.

MRS. BIJOU.

With ſurprize and vexation I almoſt was ſtunn'd;
But depending, my Lord, on your friendly aſſiſtance,
I am ready to drive all chagrin to a diſtance,
And to ſhare in the joy of our dear happy gueſts.

MR. BERIL.

What I owe to you, Careleſs, this fair one atteſts:
And our ſiſter, I hope, if I dare uſe the name,
From your friendſhip will judge of your love's ardent flame,
And, ſhort'ning your rigorous term of probation,
Now fill your kind heart with complete exultation.

LADY HARRIOT.

The warm blaze of our joy, I aſſure you, dear brother,
With the cold damp of prudery I will not ſmother.
Your friend has for you play'd ſo feeling a part,
I confeſs, I am charm'd with his ſpirit and heart.
As in law and long courtſhip he likes not to drudge,
I will make him at once my comptroller and judge.

CARELESS.

CARELESS.

I with tranſport and pride the dear office embrace!

LORD SEEWELL.

And long may you fill it with ſpirit and grace!—
My voice, my dear Careleſs, confirms her election;
And I give her with joy to your tender direction.
For ſealing, dear Tom, you may fix your own day,
Without dreading from law any irkſome delay,
As your father and I have, with friendly advances,
Already adjuſted your nuptial finances.

MR. BIJOU *(entering.)*

Our muſicians below are all ready, my Lord:
Of pleaſure you teach us to touch the true chord.
I've ſelected a few little pieces to-night,
That are ſuited, I hope, to the preſent delight.—
May we all think this day the beſt day of our life!
It will prove ſo, I'm ſure, both to me and my wife.
If a bargain ſhould tempt us, we will not be raſh,
But remember the Titian, and pocket our caſh.
To Friendſhip and Want all we can we will give,
And buy no more baubles as long as we live.

CHARLES.

I would rather have him in the next office employed!

LORD SEAWELL.

And how can that be? Is there room?—

Why, yes, I think there is room enough for him, if he will be content to—

I will prove to you, sir, that there is room enough for him, if he will be content to—

But remember the terms, and accept our offer.

To what purpose should I accept your offer, when you will not hear me?

As you tempt me, I pray you with patience to hear me.

Although reluctantly, I will hear you.

M. BLOT (aside).

Our manœuvre begins to tell already, my lord.

LORD RUSSEL;

A TRAGEDY,

OF THREE AGTS.

PREFACE.

I HAVE endeavoured to delineate, in the following Drama, an exact portrait of the noble Perſonage, whoſe name it bears; as I believe, that a more engaging model of public and private virtue can hardly be ſelected from the annals of any nation: although the extreme mildneſs of his temper, the ſimplicity of his manners, and, above all, his unaffected piety, are ſuch qualities, as are very rarely admitted in the formation of a Tragic Hero.

To render my performance intereſting to my country, I have adhered as cloſely to our hiſtory, as the nature of dramatic compoſition allowed me to do; and in points where I have varied from hiſtorical truth, ſuch variations are, I truſt, ſupported by dramatic probability.

In the ſpirited and judicious introduction to the lately-publiſhed letters of Lady Ruſſel, the teſtimony of different Hiſtorians is collected concerning the ſentiments of Charles the Second and his brother, on the impending fate of Lord Ruſſel.

" In the Duke of Monmouth's Journal, it is ſaid, " that the King told him, he inclined to have ſaved the " Lord Ruſſel, but was forced to conſent to his death, " otherwiſe he muſt have broke with his brother the " Duke of York."——Kennet.

The ſentence juſt quoted, is, I hope, a ſufficient foundation for the conduct which I have aſſigned to Charles; whoſe character indeed was ſuch, that fiction can hardly impute to him any inſtance of irreſolution, duplicity, and falſehood, which the tenor of his life will not bring within the limits of theatrical credibility.

The candid reader will readily allow the liberty I have taken, in laying the ſcene in the Tower, after Ruſſel's condemnation; as it affords many advantages to the conduct of the play.

In compliance with that reſpect, which dramatic authors have lately paid to the Clerical character, I have not introduced either Tillotſon or Burnet among the perſons of the drama, though the latter was ſo conſtant an attendant on the captivity of my Hero; an omiſſion which I have in ſome degree ſupplied, by the introduction of Mr. Spencer; a character drawn from the printed

trial of Lord Ruſſel, where the name of that gentleman appears in the liſt of thoſe, who gave an honourable evidence in behalf of the noble priſoner.

I have many obligations to the journal written by Burnet, at the requeſt of Lady Ruſſel, which contains all the minute circumſtances that occurred, during the impriſonment, and at the execution of her Lord. This very intereſting and pathetic narrative is printed in the General Dictionary, under the article Ruſſel. I have not only taken from it many of the ſentiments, which I have aſſigned to him in this Tragedy, but I have ſometimes adopted the very words, that were really uttered by Lord Ruſſel; and this I have done, not only from an affectionate admiration of his character, but from a deſpair of ſurpaſſing the elegant ſimplicity, and the force of his expreſſion.

The offer relating to his eſcape, ſo generouſly made, and ſo nobly refuſed, is a fact univerſally known, and muſt render the names of Cavendiſh and Ruſſel an honour to our country, as long as magnanimity and friendſhip retain their juſt value in the eſtimation of mankind.

Perſons

Perſons of the Drama.

KING CHARLES THE SECOND,
JAMES DUKE OF YORK,
EARL OF BEDFORD,
LORD RUSSEL,
LORD CAVENDISH,
MR. SPENCER,
LIEUTENANT OF THE TOWER.

LADY RUSSEL,
LADY MARGARET RUSSEL.

Officers, &c.

SCENE, *during the firſt Act, in* BEDFORD HOUSE, *and afterwards in the* TOWER.

LORD RUSSEL.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Bedford *and* Lady Margaret Ruſſel.

LADY MARGARET.

REST here, my gentle Father! nor again
Expoſe your wearied age and waſted ſpirits
To ſcenes of ſuch dread influence to ſhake
Each fibre of a heart that feels like yours!—
I pray you reſt with me!

BEDFORD.

My tender child!
Thanks to thy filial aid! my ſtrength returns,
And my reviving ſoul has gather'd force

~~To bear the killing ſight.—'Tis true, when firſt~~
I ſaw my mild and unoffending ſon,
Pride of my age! and England's dear reſource
In theſe diſaſtrous days! when I beheld
My blameleſs Ruſſel at that bar arraign'd,
Where only guilt ~~and infamy ſhould ſtand~~;
When I beheld each ſervile judge ſupport
A lawleſs jury baſely fram'd againſt him,
Indignant anguiſh robb'd my wounded heart
Of vital energy: quick from the court
My haſty friends hurried my ſenſeleſs frame,
To this our quiet home: but ſince, my daughter,
Thy kind endearing cares have now reſtor'd me,
I will reſume my ſtation by thy brother,
In theſe diſtreſsful moments:—to his ſide
Affection calls me, and paternal duty.

LADY MARGARET.

Forgive me, that I dare to thwart your wiſh,
But from my generous brother I've receiv'd
A kind injunction to detain your age
From that afflicting ſcene. He has engag'd
To tell us, by repeated meſſengers,

Each

Each petty circumſtance that paſſes there.
Already from the number of his friends
He has ſelected one to bring us tidings:
His faithful Spencer comes.

Enter Spencer.

BEDFORD.

What from my Son?—
The ſentence is not paſs'd!

SPENCER.

No, my dear lord.
England is yet unſullied with the ſtain
That muſt diſgrace her, if the ſword of Juſtice
Turns to the murderous dagger of Revenge,
To ſtab your virtuous ſon.—By his requeſt
I come to ſoothe your anxious ſufferings,
And to relate the proceſs of a ſcene,
Where he conjures you to appear no more.

BEDFORD.

What perjur'd ſlaves have they ſuborn'd againſt him?
How far has truth been wrong'd, and law been tortur'd,
To frame thoſe ſnares of legal death, in which

They labor to involve incautious virtue?
Have they not dealt moſt hardly with my ſon?

SPENCER.

He has experienc'd ſubtle cruelty
From venal ruffians in the robes of juſtice;
But the baſe wrong his patient worth endures,
Is the dark foil which gives the diamond luſtre.
When he requeſted aid for his defence,
His keen inſidious foes, who ſtrongly fear'd
Some upright advocate might ſave their victim,
Enjoin'd him to employ a ſervant's hand.
There roſe indeed a ſervant at his ſide,
Moſt eager for the taſk; but O! what words
Can ſpeak the fond ſurprize, and thrilling anguiſh,
Which ſhook the boſom of each ſad ſpectator,
Who in that ſervant ſaw his lovely wife?
The crowd, with eyes bedimm'd by ſtarting tears
Of tendereſt admiration, gaz'd upon her,
And murmur'd kindeſt prayers, as they beheld
Connubial love, in that angelic form,
Thus firmly yielding unexpected ſuccour
To virtue ſtruggling in oppreſſion's toils.

BEDFORD.

BEDFORD.

Moſt excellent of women! worthy offspring
Of my departed friend, the good Southampton!
If Tyranny prevails againſt thy huſband,
How ſhall the wretched Bedford's feeble age
Support thy widow'd heart? I can no more.
Than in ſtrict fellowſhip of bittereſt ſorrow
Echo thy groans, and mourn our mutual loſs.

LADY MARGARET.

Do not, dear father, do not yield ſo ſoon
To comfortleſs deſpair!—we yet may hope
The radiant probity of Ruſſel's life
Will diſſipate each dark and dangerous cloud
That perjur'd Calumny can raiſe around him.
Remember all the candor of his mind!
Think how his temperate virtues have been prais'd
By Envy's ſelf! how to the gaze of youth
His conduct has been held up as a book,
In which all Engliſh eyes may read their duty,
And learn the faireſt path to ſpotleſs honour.

SPENCER.

If abject lawyers, and a venal jury,

Should violate the ſanctity of juſtice
By Ruſſel's condemnation, ſtill his merits
Are grav'd ſo deeply on the Nation's breaſt,
He ſtands ſo firm the idol of her love,
Oppreſſion's ſelf will fear to execute
The ſentence of the proſtituted law
Againſt a life ſo priz'd.

BEDFORD.

Alas! my friend,
When did a tyrant, like vindictive York,
(For 'tis the Duke who thirſts for Ruſſel's blood)
When did a ſpirit of that ſullen temper,
Impell'd by rancorous hate, by bigot rage,
And abject terror, when did ſuch a ſpirit
Reſpect the virtue, Nature made its foe,
And treacherous Fortune gave it power to cruſh?
But tell me of the ſcene from whence you come!
Say! what has been alledg'd againſt my ſon?
I have been told the fierce and ſubtle Jefferies,
The Duke's baſe agent in this bloody buſineſs,
Relies upon the evidence of Howard,
As the ſure inſtrument of Ruſſel's death:

Unprincipled

Unprincipled he is, and prone to utter
What intereſt and fear may bid him ſwear.
What has he ſaid? or is he yet unſummon'd?

SPENCER.

Before I left your ſon, the faithleſs Howard
Began his artful tale; but ſoon he falter'd,
With feign'd affliction of a dread event,
Which ſuddenly was rumour'd through the court,
And ſtruck the throng'd aſſembly with ſuch wonder,
Malice ſtood mute, and Perſecution paus'd.
Freſh from the Tower the tidings came, that Eſſex,
From terrors of that bar, where Ruſſel ſtood,
Had with raſh violence ruſh'd out of life,
And ſtain'd his deſperate hands in his own blood.

BEDFORD.

It cannot be! the firm, the gallant Eſſex
Could never end his being ſo ignobly;
And in the moment, when his generous ſoul
Felt only for his friend, his Ruſſel's life
Yet wavering in the balance.

SPENCER.

Such, my lord,

Such is the comment of all honeſt hearts
On this dark ſtory.—Heaven reveal the murder,
And puniſh it, though in th' aſſaſſin's veins
The tainted ſtream of royal blood may flow!—
Soon as the rumour reach'd your ſon, he bade me
Attempt to penetrate this dark tranſaction,
And bring you the reſult of all I heard;
Adding, that in the inſtant of his doom,
He would diſpatch to you the noble Cavendiſh
With tidings of his ſentence.

BEDFORD.

Ah! my friend,
The fatal word, that ends his bleſſed life,
Has rung already in my tortur'd ear;
For I have ſeen the venal band ſuborn'd
To purchaſe, by the ſacrifice of truth,
The blood of her mild champion. There's his guilt,
'Tis that his pure and patriotic zeal,
Guiding the voice of an enlighten'd ſenate,
Has labor'd to preſerve the throne of England
From that blood-thirſty bigot, at whoſe feet
Her laws now lie, in haſty proſtitution,

Slaves to a tyrant yet uncrown'd; converted
From ſacred guards of ſlander'd innocence,
Into baſe engines of vindictive murder.

LADY MARGARET.

Alas! my father, thou haſt judg'd too well:
Thy dreadful preſage is too ſoon confirm'd:
Behold the zealous Cavendiſh! he comes
With no quick ſtep of joyous exultation;
But in his agitated geſture ſhews
A ſettled ſorrow, and a fierce deſpair

Enter CAVENDISH.

I come, my lord, the wretched meſſenger
Of that accurſt event, which my weak judgment,
Not reaching the extent of human baſeneſs,
Had haſtily pronounc'd beyond the line
Of poſſible injuſtice. All the crimes,
That coward Tyranny can wiſh committed,
Shall now have credit.—Ruſſel is condemn'd.

LADY MARGARET.

O mockery of juſtice!—Righteous Heaven!
Yet interpoſe to ſave him!

BEDFORD.

BEDFORD.

My kind friend,
Thou but relateſt what a father's eye
Foreſaw too clearly, when I view'd the jury,
So juſtly challeng'd by my innocent ſon,
Marſhall'd without the warrantry of law
To enſnare his life.

CAVENDISH.

Eternal infamy
Fall on the baſe aſſaſſins! chiefly fall
On thoſe ſuperior miniſters of evil,
The treacherous guardians of our trampled laws,
Who in the robes of Heaven's high delegates
Perform the work of hell! from proſtrate Juſtice
Wreſt her pure ſword, to ſtain it with the blood
Of her moſt faithful votary!

LADY MARGARET.

Yet try,
Try, my dear father, ere it prove too late,
By urgent interceſſions to preſerve him!
Your friends are many, and, howe'er inflam'd
By the vile arts of ſanguinary York,

The king has ſtill a tenderneſs of heart,
That may incline to ſpare my gentle brother.

BEDFORD.

Alas! my daughter, cheriſh not too much
A hope, whoſe cruel failure will impart
New poignancy to thy too keen affliction!
All the mild virtues, which to thy pure ſenſe
Plead for thy brother's ſafety, in the ear
Of envious Hate and terrified Oppreſſion
Cry loudly for his death.

CAVENDISH.

He ſhall not die.
What! though the blood-hound Jefferies has faſten'd
His fangs upon him! though the barbarous judges
Would make the temple of inſulted Law
The ſlaughter-houſe of Tyranny!—there yet
Are means to turn the ſharpen'd axe aſide,
And ſhield the life of their devoted victim.

BEDFORD.

What would thy dauntleſs zeal?

CAVENDISH.

Your gentle ſon

Has ſuch juſt credit with this injur'd nation,
For public virtue, and deſigns exempt
From every ſelfiſh bias of the ſoul,
Thouſands would throw into extremeſt hazard
Their fortunes, and their being, to preſerve
The dying martyr of defenceleſs freedom.
I hold it eaſy, in the very hour
Oppreſſion means to triumph in his blood,
With ſome ſelected horſemen to o'erpower
The ſlaves who guard him, ere they reach the ſcaffold,
And bear him ſwiftly to a ſafe retreat.
Applauding millions will aſſiſt his reſcue,
And bleſs the efforts of his brave deliverers!

BEDFORD.

No! Cavendiſh! by friendſhip's holy ties,
That prompt thy generous purpoſe, I conjure thee
To think of it no farther.

CAVENDISH.

What! my Lord,
Shall we look tamely on, and by connivance
Be made a party in this legal murder?

BEDFORD.

BEDFORD.

Dear ardent friend! theſe are diſaſtrous times,
And this is one of them, when all the functions
True courage is allow'd to exerciſe,
Are reſignation and a brave endurance.
My word is given to thy kind thoughtful friend,
To check all deſperate ſallies of affliction,
All, that the fond intemperance of love
Could hazard for his ſafety.

CAVENDISH.

Generous Ruſſel!
By Heaven 'tis happier far to ſhare thy death,
Than live, to ſee our wretched country robb'd
Of all her hopes in thy unequall'd virtue.

BEDFORD.

To me much happier!—to a father's heart
It would be conſolation and delight
To periſh with his child; but there are duties
More painful to ſuſtain than the ſhort ſtruggle
That ends our mortal being:—and to us
Theſe duties now belong—let us remember
The truſt that he bequeaths!—his wife! his children!

'Tis ours to live for them. Remember too
His noble answer to the princely Monmouth,
Offering to share his prison and his fate.
Did he not say, it would embitter death
To have his friends die with him?

CAVENDISH.

O my Lord!
Your sorrow is of pure and heavenly temper:
Mine the fierce anguish of indignant frenzy:
Pray pardon it!

BEDFORD.

Pardon thee! gallant spirit!
Thou bright example of exalted friendship!
Thou hast my love, my fondest admiration:
In my just heart thou rankest with my children,
And art the pillar, now my Russel falls,
That my weak age must cling to for support.

CAVENDISH.

In duty, my dear Lord, though not in merit,
You may account me your's: and pitying Heaven
May yet, in mercy to a nation's prayers,
Spare to your virtuous age your worthier son:

I cannot bend my ſpirit to admit
His fate inevitable: gracious Powers!
Who watch o'er ſuffering virtue, who inſpire
The proſperous deeds of chance-defying friendſhip,
Aſſiſt my lab'ring and diſtracted brain,
Whoſe faculties are on the rack to find
Expedients to preſerve our country's pride,
The friend and champion of her faith and freedom,
From the baſe ſtroke of tyrannous revenge!

BEDFORD.

Vain are thoſe anxious thoughts: the vigilant eye
Of keen Oppreſſion will ſecure her victim.
The nerveleſs arm of childhood could as ſoon
Wreſt from the tiger's gripe his bleeding prey,
As we by violence deliver Ruſſel
From the vindictive York.

CAVENDISH *(after a pauſe)*.

I thank thee, Heaven!
The bright idea is, I feel, from thee:
And it has chas'd the darkneſs of deſpair
From my o'erclouded mind.

BEDFORD.

BEDFORD.

What means thy ardour?

CAVENDISH.

Good angels have ſuggeſted to my ſoul
A project yet to ſave him.

BEDFORD.

Name it! name it!

CAVENDISH.

Your pardon, my dear lord!—accept alone
This firm aſſurance, that my new deſign
Has nought of raſh exertion to involve
A ſingle life in danger! or if one,
It muſt be mine alone; and in this criſis,
How gladly ſhall I yield my life for his,
And die triumphant in the bleſt exchange! [*Exit.*

LADY MARGARET.

Brave Cavendiſh!—He's gone—Ye ſaints of heaven;
If friendſhip, like your own, deſerves your care,
Go ever with him, and from all the perils,
That wait the noble ſelf-neglecting ſpirit,
Protect him! and aſſiſt his godlike aim!

Preſerve this matchleſs pair of gallant friends,
And let them ſhine the ornament of earth!

BEDFORD.

Thou pray'ſt in vain, dear child!—this dauntleſs friend,
Tranſcendent as he is in truth and honour,
Can nought avail us: he muſt prove the dupe
Of ardent paſſions and of ſanguine virtue.
If there's a ray of glimmering hope, that yet
May faintly lead us through this night of horror,
It cannot riſe from any bright endowments
In thoſe we love, but rather from the vice,
The abject vice, that glares in our oppreſſors.
Our tyrants are neceſſitous, and thirſt
For gold, as keenly as for innocent blood.
Kind fortune, haply for this great emergence,
Has made me maſter of no common wealth;
And this, with lucky art diſtributed
Among the needy minions of the king,
May purchaſe ſtill our Ruſſel's forfeit life.—
Come! my dear child, retire we to conſult
On this our ſole reſource! Thou will not ſcruple
To meet, and to embrace a noble poverty,
If thy loſt portion can redeem thy brother!

LADY

LADY MARGARET.

Bleſt be thy happieſt thought, my tender father!
All wealth, all good is center'd in his ſafety;
And, witneſs Heaven! my heart would freely bear
All the loath'd hardſhips of the houſeleſs vagrant,
And think them bleſſings, if they aught conduc'd
To reſcue Ruſſel from a traitor's death.

End of ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Lord *and* Lady Ruſſel *in Priſon.*

A Table with Papers, Pen, and Ink.

LADY RUSSEL.

MUST I intreat in vain?—Alas! my Ruſſel,
Where is thy ſweet compliancy of ſoul,
That made, till now, thy Rachel's voice a ſtranger
To rude and irkſome importunity?

Has life ſo little to engage thy wiſhes
Thou wilt not aſk to live?

RUSSEL.

Canſt thou, my love,
By ſo unkind a queſtion canſt thou give
Such hard conſtruction to thy Ruſſel's thoughts?
Where is there one inhabitant of earth,
If not thy huſband, who has every cauſe
To cheriſh his exiſtence?—Gracious Power!
Whoſe wiſdom regulates the lot of mortals,
I feel, and with devouteſt gratitude
Bleſs thee for ſignal bounties to thy ſervant,
But moſt for this, thy beſt and deareſt gift,
This lovely virtuous woman; whom to part with
Is now my hardeſt trial: but from thee,
Dread Arbiter of every human ſcene!
(However ſtrange to man's contracted ſenſe)
This trial comes; O ſtrengthen us to bear it
With tender fortitude and meek obedience!

LADY RUSSEL.

It is our duty ſtill, and Heaven enjoins it,
To make all blameleſs efforts to preſerve

A life ſo precious: if thy rigid honor,
In pity both to me and to thy children,
Will ſtoop to write one line of ſupplication
To the all-powerful York, he will obtain
Thy inſtant pardon from the pliant king.

RUSSEL.

Thou knoweſt not th' inexorable hate
Of that blood-thirſty ſpirit.—It has pleas'd
The author of my life to let the rage
Of ruthleſs bigotry prevail againſt it:
A band of venal or miſguided men
Have doom'd me to the ſcaffold, on the plea
That I have plotted to deſtroy my ſovereign,
Though Heaven and thou, who knoweſt all my ſoul,
See the baſe falſhood of the bloody charge:
But to the voice of Law, however tortur'd,
I owe a prompt obedience; nought remains
But that I meet the ſtroke of ſtern Oppreſſion
As ſuits the votary of Public Virtue!
I muſt not fully, by a baſe ſubmiſſion,
A name yet ſpotleſs, the ſole legacy
It is allow'd me to bequeath my children.

LADY RUSSEL.

Dear as I hold thy life, which is in truth
My only anchor in this ſea of troubles,
Believe me, Ruſſel, I would rather yield,
Without a ſtruggle yield that precious life
To Perſecution's ſtroke, rather than lead,
If aught could lead, thy clear and reſolute virtue
To one baſe act of weakneſs and diſhonour.

RUSSEL.

Alas! my love, the cloud of thy affliction
Has dimm'd thy quick diſcernment; but the paper,
Which thy fond care now urges me to write,
Would darken all the ſtory of my life:
I muſt not, in that ſtory's cloſing leaf,
Where Fortitude ſhould fix the ſeal of Honor,
Mar the fair record with a fearful blot.

LADY RUSSEL.

Dear Ruſſel! exerciſe thy purer judgment;
Theſe are not ſcruples of thy manly reaſon,
But niceties of proud fantaſtic honor,
Of honor jealous to a vain exceſs.
How can the meaſure, that my love ſolicits,

Involve thee in diſgrace? Without abaſement,
Can injur'd Innocence not ſay to Power,
Give me the life, of which Iniquity
Has made thy voice the arbiter?

RUSSEL.

Thou knoweſt,
Dear inmate of my ſecret ſoul! kind prompter
Of my beſt thoughts! it has been long the aim
Of my paſt life to win my country's love;
Not by the popular arts of vain ambition,
(Which Nature never form'd me to poſſeſs)
But by inceſſant vigilance to ſhield
Our faith and freedom, by an ardent wiſh
To prove that patriot virtue, (the ſtale jeſt
Of ſervile ſpirits, as an empty name)
Is an exiſting vigorous principle
In minds of Engliſh temper. I have fail'd
In the prime object that my ſoul purſued,
To ſave our pure religion and our laws
From Bigotry's encroachment; and I loſe
My life, endanger'd by that noble conflict:
But I have gain'd, and let me ſtill preſerve it!

The

The kind eſteem of this enlighten'd nation:
This I muſt forfeit, forfeit all the praiſe
And influence of no inglorious life,
If I become an abject ſuppliant
To that fierce zealot, from whoſe iron rod
I ſtrove to ſhelter this devoted land.

LADY RUSSEL.

No, Ruſſel; the corrupted lips of Faction
Are prone to evil: but the voice of ages,
The ſentence of the world, is firmly juſt;
And by that ſentence thou art ſure to ſtand
High on the liſt of thoſe bright characters
Immortaliz'd with pure idolatry
By Truth and Freedom; men whoſe very name
Is ſweeteſt muſic to the ear of Nature.
If in a future age, when we are duſt,
Thy virtues can be queſtion'd, it muſt be
By ſycophants, who, flattering royalty,
With ſlanderous ſurmiſes would degrade
Each juſt antagoniſt of lawleſs power;
Or by thoſe yet more abject enemies,
Thoſe ſceptics of a cold ſarcaſtic ſpirit,

Who,

Who, judging from their own contracted hearts,
Poſſeſs no confidence in human virtue.

RUSSEL.

Affection over-rates thy Ruſſel's merit:
But let this fond opinion of his fame
Preclude thy vain requeſt, which, being granted,
Would but afflict thy love. Conſider well
How it would wound thy generous pride, to hear
Thy lord had ſtain'd the life thou deem'ſt ſo glorious
By an ignoble eagerneſs to live.

LADY RUSSEL.

Believe me, Ruſſel, it would wound me more
To think that, deaf to all my juſt entreaties,
My huſband, careleſs of his orphan children,
With ſullen dignity threw life away,
Rather than ſtoop to ſue for the remiſſion
Of his unrighteous doom.

RUSSEL.

Alas! my love,
Should I implicitly purſue the dictates
Of all thy fond ſolicitude, ſuch conduct
Would

Would but provoke the inſult of our foes,
And could avail thee nothing.

LADY RUSSEL.

Yes, my Ruſſel,
Should the relentleſs York reject thy prayer,
In thoſe ſad years of bitterneſs and anguiſh,
When, if the will of Heaven is fix'd to part us,
My widow'd ſoul, with unabating ſorrow,
Muſt dwell upon thy image, and for ever
Repaſs in thought theſe agonizing ſcenes,
It will afford me then a faint relief,
To think my active love, in this diſtreſs,
Omitted nothing, that had duty's ſanction,
To ſnatch thee from the ſcaffold.

RUSSEL.

Lovely ſuppliant!
Thy virtuous tenderneſs has melted me;
And, though I could not purchaſe it by guilt,
Thy peace is dearer to my heart than glory.
Thou ſhalt not ſay thy Ruſſel e'er refus'd
One prayer of thine:—give me again the pen.
My weak diſdain rejected. [*Ruſſel writes.*

LADY

LADY RUSSEL.

Bleſs thy kindneſs!

Bleſs thy prevailing love! for I perceive
How hardly it has ſtruggled, to obtain
This triumph over brave indignant pride,
Abhorring e'en the ſhadow of diſgrace,—
O thou all-powerful Spirit! who canſt make
The meaneſt implements of mortal uſe
Thy miniſters of ſafety or deſtruction;
Grant that this love-directed pen may prove
An inſtrument of gracious preſervation!
Guide thou my Ruſſel's hand!—into this paper
Pour words of heavenly potency to change
The bloody wiſh of blinded Superſtition,
And melt vindictive Rancour into mercy!

Enter Spencer.

LADY RUSSEL.

Kind Spencer! opportunely art thou come
To chear my Ruſſel's ſolitary hour,
While my keen hopes to win by ſupplication,

From potent York, the pardon of my Lord,
Force me to leave him.

SPENCER.

Ill befall the heart
That melts not at the voice of ſuch a ſuppliant!

RUSSEL.

Good Spencer! thanks to that unwearied zeal
Which makes thee frequent in thy welcome viſits
To a poor captive.—There, my anxious Love!
Take what thy truth and tenderneſs have forc'd
From Ruſſel's frail and yielding reſolution:
His pliancy, I know, will meet with blame;
But thoſe who have a heart to feel thy merits,
Will bluſh at their quick cenſure, and recall it.

LADY RUSSEL.

Now let me, Ruſſel, from thy priſon fly,
Like the exploring dove, whoſe eager wing
Flew from the ark, to viſit it again
With bleſt aſſurance of ſubſiding ſtorms. [*Exit.*

RUSSEL.

My worthy kinſman, when my voice is ſilenc'd,
As ſoon it will be, witneſs to the world

The tender virtues and connubial love
Of that angelic woman!—And, I pray,
As gentleneſs and honor have endear'd thee
To all our houſe, do thou, my faithful Spencer,
Attend, with pitying care, my wife and father
On the dread day that ends our mortal union;
Watch them with all the vigilance of friendſhip,
And ſoothe the recent anguiſh of their grief.

SPENCER.

Heaven yet, my Lord, may ſave us from that ſcene
Of private woe and national diſtreſs.

RUSSEL.

Believe me, though I ſtoop to aſk for life,
I aſk not, thinking to obtain my ſuit;
But from the tender wiſh to mitigate
The future ſufferings of a faithful mourner,
By this compliance with her fondeſt prayer.

SPENCER.

The touching eloquence of her affliction,
Join'd to the memory of her father's merit,
That honour'd ſervant of the Crown, Southampton,

May

May wreſt your pardon from the ſavage heart
Of ſullen York.

RUSSEL.

Impoſſible, my friend!
My life's the prey that his inſatiate rage
Has keenly chas'd—he holds it in his toils,
And every proſpect of eſcape is clos'd.

SPENCER.

Yet think, my Lord, that other means of ſafety——

RUSSEL.

No, Spencer: I have thought, I truſt not vainly,
Of the chief object that my mind muſt dwell on,
How to ſuſtain the trying part to which
The will of Heaven appoints me; how to meet
The ſudden ſtroke of ignominious death,
As may become the man whoſe life has won
From this brave land obſervance and regard.—
O Spencer! when the wearied eye ſurveys
The gloomy face of Earth, the Law's abuſe,
And Freedom ſinking under ſavage Power,
The wreck of Public Virtue, the baſe arts
And treachery of her apoſtate ſons,

With all the countleſs ills that in her train
A blind and barbarous Superſtition brings;
When theſe are preſent to the guiltleſs mind,
It ſeems a fair and bleſſed fate to fly
From this dark den of miſery and vice,
To the bright preſence of divine Perfection!

SPENCER.

Yet of how pure a nature are thoſe bleſſings
This earth would furniſh to your reſcued virtue!

RUSSEL.

O gentle kinſman! in my ſofter hours
My heart ſtill clings to thoſe attractive objects
Of tendereſt attachment; for this heart
Was fram'd by nature for the ſweet enjoyment
Of ſocial duties, and domeſtic bliſs.
I will avow to thee, (for thy mild ſpirit
Can ſympathize in every true diſtreſs)
That when I think to what exceſs of anguiſh
I leave the worthieſt and moſt tender wife,
That with endearing innocence and love
E'er bleſt a huſband, the forbidden tear
Starts from my eye perforce, my frame is chill'd,

And ſhudders at the ſharp divorce of ſteel,
So ſoon to fall upon our chaſte affection.

SPENCER.

Yet may ye live a bleſſing to each other;
And give a bright example to mankind,
That happineſs abides with virtuous love!—
Life ſtands within your choice:—the King, who knows
With what a fond reſpect and confidence
The generous people lean to the opinion
Of men ſo rooted in their hearts as you are,
Courts your acceptance of immediate pardon;
If you will but acknowledge, in his preſence,
That you believe no ſubject has a right,
However tempted, to reſiſt the Throne.

RUSSEL.

Have any of my friends ſuppos'd, that Ruſſel
Could buy exiſtence at a price like this?

SPENCER.

The worthy churchmen, who in this vile priſon
Have been your kind aſſiduous attendants,
Build on this ground ſtrong hopes;—they have obtain'd
The ſanction of your venerable father

To

To argue with you this important queſtion;
Believing they may lead your candid mind
To terms, which, in their cool conſiderate judgment,
Have the clear warrantry of truth and reaſon.

RUSSEL.

Good men! they are an honor to the church
For ſignal harmony of faith and practice;
But haply, cramp'd by piety's nice ſcruples,
Their minds have not expanded to embrace
The mighty cauſe of Freedom.—O my friend!
I want the ſpirit-ſtirring faculty
Of eloquence, to range in bright array
The potent claims of Nature, and enliſt
In her pure ſervice all the noble paſſions
That give diſtinction to the life of man:
But gracious Heaven endow'd me with a heart
To act the upright virtuous citizen;
And meet the axe, much rather than betray
The charter'd rights of this my native land.

SPENCER.

Are you, my Lord, ſo ſettled in your thoughts

On this nice queſtion, that no arguments
May ſhake the airy fabric of opinion?

RUSSEL.

Good Spencer, thou haſt known me many years,
And for a man of plain and ſimple reaſon;
Which clearly tells me that the King's poſition,
Once granted, ſinks the free-born ſons of England
To the tame vaſſals of a Turkiſh deſpot.
My mind can frame no image of a ſtate
That laws have limited, without a right
To guard thoſe limitations; and my conſcience,
That higher ſovereign, who challenges
My firſt obedience in all points of moment,
Will not permit me, by a different language,
To purchaſe life from the deluded King.

SPENCER.

With painful admiration I have heard
The ſteady dictates of your patriot virtue,
That will, with mingled agony and joy,
Confirm the preſage of your noble father.
Howe'er he liſtens, with attentive fondneſs,
To all that friendly zeal ſuggeſts to ſave you,

He knows, and glories in your firm adherence
To the dear rights of England; nor can wiſh,
Though with the ſanction of ſuch friends, to ſee you
Exchange it for the lure of forfeit life.

RUSSEL.

Although I truſt he fully knows that mind,
Which his fond cares have ſtrengthen'd and enrich'd
With its beſt powers of manly reſolution;
Yet, as ill-grounded and diſtreſſing doubts
Are natural infirmities of age,
At times, perchance, my venerable father
May fear leſt the approach of violent death
Should with diſgraceful pliancy infect
The ſpirit of his ſon—I therefore pray thee
Return; aſſure him, that our pious friends
Muſt loſe their well-meant labor in debate:
My mind's unchangeable; and gracious Heaven,
As my dark fate draws nearer, gives my ſoul
New ſtrength to triumph o'er its ſhadowy terrors!
Aſſure the tender Bedford, I ſhall meet
The hour of execution as his love
Muſt wiſh, with that ſedate and chearful brow

Which

Which ſuits the guiltleſs ſon of ſuch a father.

SPENCER.

My Lord, I will religiouſly obey you,
And on the inſtant; as I now perceive
Your chief heart-choſen friend is come to ſhare
The private converſe of your precious hours. [*Exit.*

Enter CAVENDISH.

RUSSEL.

Welcome, dear Cavendiſh! my eager heart
Has panted for thy preſence, keenly wiſhing
To reſt the burthen of its cares on thee.
Yet, ere I ceaſe to live, O let me take
One long farewel of him, whoſe friendſhip gave
Luſtre and value to that life which fate
Severely calls me to reſign!

CAVENDISH.

Which Love
And Friendſhip's voice command thee to preſerve.—
I come to ſave thee, Ruſſel! nor muſt loſe
One moment in the heaven-ſuggeſted plan.

RUSSEL.

Dear ſanguine friend, the fond illuſive warmth

Of thy kind heart inveſts thy eager fancy
With viſionary power.

CAVENDISH.

The fiends of hell
Shall not defeat the project my good angel
Inſpires for thy protection!—Swear thou, firſt,
By our inviolate friendſhip, and by ties
Yet ſtronger on thy heart, thy wife and children,
Swear thou wilt grant me one requeſt.

RUSSEL.

Dear Cavendiſh,
Thou wouldſt engage me in ſome haſty buſineſs,
Pregnant with danger to thy generous ſelf;
Elſe had thy frank affection ne'er devis'd
A bond ſo needleſs, to the mind which holds
Requeſts from thee as ſacred as the laws
Of faith and honor:—but explain thy purpoſe.

CAVENDISH.

Here, in this happy hour of privacy,
Let us exchange our habits; ſo may'ſt thou,
Muffling thy face as in the veil of ſorrow,
Paſs unſuſpected, and elude the guard.

Two of our truſty friends are plac'd to meet thee,
And all the means of thy eſcape concerted.
Haſte, I conjure thee! while I here remain
Wrapt in thy mourning garb; but with a ſpirit
Ready to burſt into triumphant joy,
And mock the baffled malice of thy foes.

RUSSEL.

Brave Cavendiſh! 'tis hard to quit a world
That furniſhes ſuch friends; yet eaſier this,
Than by a haſty flight from death to hazard
A life I hold ſtill dearer than my own.
No, I can ne'er expoſe thy generous virtue
To that baſe fate thou urgeſt me to ſhun.

CAVENDISH.

They dare not ſtrike at me; their venal juries
Have paſt no treacherous verdict on my head.

RUSSEL.

The eminence of thy exalted virtue
Would make thee their ſure victim; and perchance
The latent ruffians (ſuch I think there are)
Who robb'd the injur'd world of gallant Eſſex,

Would double, in the mind of their baſe maſter,
Their murd'rous merits by diſpatching thee.

CAVENDISH.

There is no peril; but admit the worſt,
I want not ſtrength to grapple with ſuch villains,
And wear a dagger here to puniſh them.

RUSSEL.

Friend of my inmoſt ſoul! thy generous offer
Yet cloſer draws thoſe honorable bands
That in our mortal pilgrimage have bound us
Firm to each other, and, defying death,
Will prove to us, I truſt, in brighter ſcenes,
A laſting unextinguiſhable ſource
Of pure ambition and angelic joy.
But the kind purpoſe of thy noble zeal
Thy Ruſſel muſt reject. Granting thy plan
Free from all perils to thy precious life,
(And it abounds with many moſt alarming);
Flight, howſoe'er effected, would produce
Diſhonour to thy friend, as wanting truſt
In ſpotleſs innocence or manly courage.

CAVENDISH.

CAVENDISH.

The tongue of Slander dares not to impeach
Thy fortitude!

RUSSEL.

Yet more: for I will lay
My ſecret ſoul before thee.—Thou haſt ſeen
How far thy friendſhip and my Rachel's love
Have power to make life lovely in my ſight;
And my kind father, whoſe declining age——
But I muſt pauſe, and check this natural burſt
Of tender gratitude.—Thou fully knoweſt
All the ſtrong ties that chain my heart to earth;
Yet I perceive theſe adamantine links,
Touch'd, without doubt, by heavenly influence,
Seem to give way; and my aſpiring ſoul
Begins to covet that ignoble fate,
Which ſhews ſo horrible in vulgar eyes!

CAVENDISH.

And canſt thou wiſh to leave us?

RUSSEL.

O my friend!
Among the ſtrongeſt paſſions of my heart,

Perhaps more forcible than love and friendſhip,
From childhood I have cheriſh'd an attachment
To my brave country:—though a tranſient cloud
Now hovers o'er her, my prophetic eyes
Perceive that ſhe is deſtin'd to emerge
To happineſs and glory. Thou ſhalt live,
Dear noble friend! to view, and to aſſiſt
This bleſt event.—The death I am to ſuffer
Will more contribute, than my life could do,
To England's welfare:—in the future fabric,
Deſtin'd to ſave and to perpetuate—
The ſapp'd foundations of her faith and freedom,
My blood may prove a cement; this idea
Suſtains, inſpirits, and delights my ſoul.

CAVENDISH.

Heroic Ruſſel! bright and genuine martyr
Of Liberty and Truth! if thou muſt periſh,
I yet ſhall wear, engraven on my heart,
The radiant image of thy ſignal virtues,
As a pure charm, of potency to guard
The lowlieſt mind from every ſervile thought.—
Hark! ſure I heard the hated voice of York!

Dares he inſult impriſon'd innocence,
By venturing to approach it? May we not
Move farther off from that deteſted ſound?
It ſhakes my tortur'd brain, and almoſt tempts me
To ruſh at once, and from the coward breaſt
Of that apoſtate tear th' envenom'd heart
That guides the murd'rous axe againſt my Ruſſel.

RUSSEL.

Patience, dear ardent ſpirit!—Come this way;
The adjoining chamber is allotted me
For privacy and prayer. Come, to receive
The benediction of thy dying friend. [*Exeunt.*

Enter York, *with the* Lieutenant *of the Tower.*

YORK.

I know ſome proud abettors of his guilt
Are plotting his eſcape; but mark, Lieutenant,
If the convicted traitor in your charge
Appear not on his ſummons to the ſcaffold,
Your life ſhall anſwer it.

LIEUTENANT.

I truſt your Highneſs

Will

Will never ſee occaſion to condemn me
For any breach or negligence of duty.

Enter Lady Ruſſel.

LADY RUSSEL.

May an unhappy mourner dare to hope
That gracious mercy guides the princely York
To Ruſſel's priſon? At your feet I fall
In my dear Lord's behalf, who in this paper
Implores your interceſſion with the King
To ſave an innocent and injur'd ſubject.

YORK.

Riſe, Madam!—Tell your Lord, that I forgive him
His bold ſeditious practices to bar
My juſt ſucceſſion to the Engliſh throne;
But my allegiance and fraternal duty
Forbid me to appear the advocate
Of one whoſe life is forfeit to the law
For plotting to deſtroy my royal brother.
In pity to your ſufferings, I adviſe you
To waſte no fruitleſs labor in oppoſing
That ſtroke of juſtice which we all lament,
But which the ſafety of the realm requires. [*Exit.*

LADY

LADY RUSSEL.

Thou ruthleſs hypocrite! thy ſullen cruelty
Converts the ſwelling tear of ſupplication
To fiery ſcorn; and my prophetic ſpirit
Foreſees an hour in which thy abject ſoul,
With more than womaniſh terror, ſhall implore
That ſuccour thy hard heart denies to me.

LIEUTENANT.

O Lady! thy unmerited afflictions
Have ſeiz'd a ſtranger's boſom, and impel me
To make ſome effort to aſſiſt thy prayers.
The Duke is mercileſs, and thirſts for blood;
But pity harbours in our Sovereign's heart:
I know this very morning he has utter'd
Words of kind import to your injur'd Lord:
If, in ſome happy minute, you could throw
Your ſorrows at his feet, they muſt prevail.
He ſtill is in the precincts of the Tower;
Wait here ſome moments, and kind Heaven may teach me
To draw him this way yet, ere he rejoins
His peſtilent counſellor, the cruel Duke. [*Exit.*

LADY RUSSEL.

The bleſſings of my grateful heart go with thee!
Good angels ſecond the unlook'd-for pity
Of this brave ſoldier! Grant me power to ſpeak
My Ruſſel's wrongs to the miſguided King!
And thou, bleſt ſpirit of my virtuous father,
Whoſe matchleſs ſervices ſo well deſerve
The kind remembrance of a royal maſter,
Inſpire thy ſuppliant child with words to melt
The harden'd heart of Grandeur!—He approaches!—
O cruel fate! at ſight of my diſtreſs
He turns, as eager to avoid a wretch
He dares not ſuccour!—Stay, my gentle Sovereign;
Yet ſtay, yet hear the miſerable mourner
Who claims thy mercy.—Heaven! he hears my prayer;
He ſtops—he doubts—and his reverted eye
Looks kindly back. Behold, my gracious Liege!
Behold the daughter of thy lov'd Southampton
Proſtrate before thee, and yet wanting voice
To utter all the juſt and ardent prayer
Her heart addreſſes to thy clemency!

Enter the King.

KING.

Riſe, lovely mourner!—be aſſur'd I pity
Your virtuous ſufferings; and ſincerely mourn
Thoſe hard neceſſities of ſtate, whoſe force
O'er-rules the milder wiſhes of my mind
To ſpare the precious life for which you kneel.

LADY RUSSEL.

If the bright cherub Mercy has inſpir'd
Your royal boſom with a wiſh to ſave him,
O let no ſubtle fiend, with baſe ſuggeſtion,
Subdue that heavenly impulſe!—ne'er was monarch
More loudly call'd, by Equity and Truth,
To the exertion of his nobleſt power,
The privilege to ſpare.—So may my ſoul
Find grace before the judgment-ſeat of Heaven,
As it is ſure my Ruſſel never harbour'd
A ſingle thought of blood, or aught of evil,
Againſt the life and welfare of his King:
Nay more, my Liege; I know his gentle virtue
Has often join'd in painful fellowſhip
With bold bad men, whom his pure heart abhorr'd,

To lead your child, the young and princely Monmouth,
From the dark paths of their pernicious counſel.

KING.

Your Lord is happy in an advocate
Of moſt perſuaſive powers: I wiſh, but dare not,
To ſtop the courſe of the offended law
Againſt the man for whom your tender virtues
Plead with ſuch fervency:—my kingdom's peace
Demands the dread completion of his ſentence;
His reſcu'd life would lead triumphant Faction
To practices more daring, and diſtract
The agitated realm with civil broils.

LADY RUSSEL.

Alas! you little know the gentle ſpirit
Of my wrong'd Lord. But if his life is held
So hazardous to England's peace, my Liege,
O let him paſs the remnant of his days
Far from this troubled iſle:—his wife and children
Will guide th' obedient exile where you order;
And, if a deſert yields him life and ſafety,
Think paradiſe is there!

KING.

KING.

—You touch my ſoul,
Fair ſuppliant! Let them blame my pliant weakneſs;
I am not marble, and muſt ſhew you mercy.—
Where is my Lord of Bedford—with his ſon?

LADY RUSSEL.

No, my kind Sovereign;—ſhall I fly to ſeek him?

KING.

Bid him, with inſtant ſpeed, prepare a veſſel,
That may convey Lord Ruſſel to the coaſt
Of France or Holland, as our will directs.—
Lady, you little know what cruel bars
Obſtruct the willing ſtep of royal mercy:
Kings are forc'd often to do good by ſtealth,
And ſuch is now my curſe.—But let your father
Make preparations for a ſecret flight,
And wait our pleaſure with the priſoner here.
Ere night he ſhall receive our terms of pardon,
And with them an expreſs, though private order
For the enlargement of your captive Lord.

LADY RUSSEL.

May the great Fountain of beneficence,

The

The King of kings, reward my gracious maſter
For this kind promiſe to his grateful ſervant!—
O my good Liege! let but your own mild ſpirit
Be your prime counſellor, to ſhut your ear
Againſt the ſubtleties of cruel zealots;
Tranquillity ſhall bleſs your ſafe dominion,
And loyalty and love ſupport your throne.—
But let me fly to my deliver'd Ruſſel
With theſe moſt happy tidings of your bounty;
And in reiterated prayers to Heaven,
For every good on my indulgent Sovereign,
Pour forth the fullneſs of my ſwelling heart! [*Exit.*

KING.

How touching is her love! I envy Ruſſel
Th' angelic tenderneſs of that chaſte woman.

Enter York.

YORK.

What! has the whining wife of guilty Ruſſel
Peſter'd your ear, my brother, with vain tales,
To vouch the truth of that convicted traitor?
Whoſe death muſt now be ſpeedy, to ſecure
Your kingdom's quiet, and your perſon's ſafety.

KING.

KING.

Brother, your Romiſh friends incline too much
To ſanguinary counſels—I abhor them!
What, if in pity to a virtuous woman,
In kind remembrance of her father's merits,
Friend of our exil'd youth, and beſt ſupport
Of our recover'd throne; what if I grant
Some little mercy to her urgent prayer,
And change her huſband's death to baniſhment?

YORK.

By Heaven it muſt not be!—*what!* when the Law,
That faithful guardian of your ſacred life,
Has paſt its ſentence on your proſtrate foe,
For baſe conſpiracy and bloody treaſon,
Falſe to yourſelf, ſhall you, in weak compaſſion
To an inſinuating woman's tears,
Thus reſcue and empower Rebellion's idol
To form a ſecond more ſucceſsful plot?

KING.

Your haſty fear outruns true policy;
And this exceſs of rigor, which your prieſts
Have taught you, bodes, I think, but little good

Both

Both to your power and mine.—You, when you chuſe,
May viſit Rome; I, brother, am too old
To enter once again on foreign travels.

YORK.

Nor may we ſuffer you to fall at home,
Through careleſs indolence, by Treaſon's dagger.
Think not I ſpeak from ancient enmity
To this inſidious Ruſſel: for myſelf,
He has my pardon for his crimes to me;
But the regard I owe your hallow'd perſon,
Leads me to preſs for his immediate death:
Before the houſe that bears his father's name,
The houſe that hid his bloody machinations,
I wiſh to ſee the murd'rous rebel die.—
But let us haſte from hence. I will aſſemble
The members of your council moſt inſtructed
In this baſe treaſon—they will clearly prove
You have but this alternative to chuſe,
To execute or periſh——One muſt fall,
The traiterous convict, or the injur'd King.

End of ACT II.

ACT

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Lord Ruſſel *writing, and attended by* Spencer.

SPENCER.

QUIT, my dear Lord, your mournful preparation
For that unworthy fate, which your bleſt conſort,
Here fully prov'd our good and guardian angel,
Has happily averted.

RUSSEL.

When a life
Hangs, my good Spencer, on a prince's word,
Whoſe reſolution is the pliant ſlave
Of artifice and importunity,
Reaſon diſdains to take into account
A poor poſſeſſion held on ſuch a tenure.
I can believe the King inclines to ſave me;
But know how ſoon his unreſiſting ſpirit
Yields to the voice of that vindictive zeal,

Which with inceſſant and increaſing fury
Now clamours for my blood:—I therefore hold it
The part of prudence to leave nought undone,
Which, on a ſudden ſummons to the block,
I yet might wiſh, but want the time to do.

SPENCER.

Uſeleſs (though noble) may this caution prove!

RUSSEL.

Be that as Heaven thinks beſt.—Since buſy Rumour,
In his blind haſte to catch a fleeting image,
Is apt to form a faithleſs portraiture
Of public characters, I here, my friend,
Have, as a legacy, bequeath'd the world
A true though ſimple picture of myſelf.
When I am gone, my honeſt countrymen,
Reading this paper, may with confidence
Say, Such was Ruſſel—this account of him
Being as clear from falſhood and diſguiſe
As that which, in his hour of heavenly audit,
Muſt prove the ground of his eternal doom.
Here is my lateſt taſk; peruſe this letter,
Which on my death the King is to receive!

SPENCER.

SPENCER.

It breathes that gentle magnanimity
For which your life is noted.

RUSSEL.

At the time,
The ſolemn time, when the calm ſoul prepares
For quick departure to that world of peace,
Where enmity and anger cannot dwell,
'Tis ſurely right to cloſe our earthly feuds,
And part from all men in pure charity.
Though I have never ſinn'd againſt my ſovereign,
By any deed or thought that meant him ill,
In many vain and inconſiderate hours
I yet have ſported with his name and frailties
So idly, that I hold it decent now
To crave his pardon for ſuch levities;
And, in the gentleſt language I can uſe,
To intimate, that, dying thus unjuſtly,
I pardon all promoters of my death,
The higheſt as the loweſt.

SPENCER.

Ceaſe, my Lord,

To dwell on dying thoughts with eyes that ſpeak
Of life and comfort—your deliverer
Comes, to reſtore you to domeſtic bliſs.

Enter Lady Ruſſel.

LADY RUSSEL.

All, my dear rescued Love! all is prepar'd
To aid your bleſt removal from this land
Of danger and diſſention.—To your ſight
Exile ſhall ſeem a kind familiar friend,
Conducting you to ſafety and delight;
You ſhall not feel you have a foreign home,
For all your houſe, who live but in your preſence,
Are fix'd to travel with us:—the kind Bedford
Will to the rough ſea truſt his feeble age
For your ſociety. O had you ſeen
How our dear little ones receiv'd the tidings
Of this heart-healing voyage! how they pant
To throw their eager fondling arms around you,
And welcome you again to life and joy!

Enter Bedford.

BEDFORD.

Pride of my ſoul! my dear, recover'd ſon!
Again I view thee, with parental tranſport,
Snatch'd from the broken ſnares of ſhameful death
By this bleſt hand!—In vain thy ſuppliant father
Had offer'd to exchange his envied treaſures
For that ſuperior wealth, which in his heart
Outweighs all opulence:—ſullen Revenge,
Subduing Avarice, with ſcorn rejected
Thy proffer'd ranſom. Blank deſpair had ſeiz'd me;
But in the hour when human efforts fail'd,
This pitying ſeraph, in a woman's form,
Brings heavenly aid, and turns a tyrant's heart
To bleſs the trembling world with Ruſſel's life!

RUSSEL.

Dear objects of my love! I pray you check
This eagerneſs of joy; for O I feel
That it muſt prove to you the treacherous herald
Of heavier grief!—your kind exulting hope
Is a brief day of ſummer out of ſeaſon,
That, promiſing to end ſtern winter's tyranny,

 Does

Does but ſupply to his ſuſpended breath
The power to pierce more deeply:—pray be caution'd,
And with juſt foreſight arm yourſelves againſt
The certain rigour of th' inclement time.

BEDFORD.

Has not the King relented, and engag'd
His royal word to ſave and ſet thee free?

RUSSEL.

Alas, my father! had his word poſſeſs'd
That ſtedfaſt ſanctity which ſhould belong
To the pure breath of princes, this fair iſle,
Who truſted in his faith, had never known
Her preſent depth of national diſgrace:
Have we not ſeen our ſovereign's promiſes
Proverbially invalid?—Here comes one
Whoſe meſſage will, I doubt not, end the queſtion.

Enter an Officer, *who beckons* Ruſſel, *and ſpeaks to him aſide.*

BEDFORD.

O my dear daughter! the high flood of hope
Sinks in my heart, and leaves a hideous void.

LADY RUSSEL.

Speak, ſpeak, my Ruſſel! is it life or death?

RUSSEL.

Patience, ſweet ſufferer!—Pray inform the ſheriff,
Although this ſhort and peremptory ſummons
Savours of cruel haſte, he ſhall not wait.

[*Exit* Officer.

RUSSEL.

Ye, whoſe keen ſorrow has more power to ſhake
The heart of Ruſſel than th' impending axe,
By our pure love let me conjure ye now
To reconcile your grief-diſtemper'd thoughts
To Heaven's dread pleaſure; who, for ſome high purpoſe,
Permits the oppreſſive doom of innocence!
The King has ſignified he cannot ſave me,
And I muſt die to-day.

LADY RUSSEL.

Perfidious cruelty!
But I will fly, and by my loud complaint,
Waking dead Honor in his wither'd mind,
Force from the treacherous King his promis'd mercy.

[*Exit.*

BEDFORD.

BEDFORD.

I yet will make one hopeleſs effort more
To ſtop the vengeance of inſatiate York. [*Exit.*

RUSSEL.

Go, ye kind beings! for the buſy love
That finds employment, though in fruitleſs labor,
Lightens the preſſure of the grief it bears.—
Thou ſeeſt, good Spencer, that my tender wife
Is now ſupported by her zeal to ſave me;
But on my death, the quickneſs of her ſpirit
Will work like latent fire within her heart,
A ſlow conſumer of her waſting frame.
It is her fate that wounds me—for my own
Is but the ſhorteſt and moſt eaſy paſſage
From earthly trouble to celeſtial joy.
It is the fancy of the vulgar mind
That fooliſhly arrays the dreaded form
Of ſudden death in viſionary horrors:
Believe me, Spencer, in the month juſt paſt,
The tranſient ſickneſs of my lovely boy
Preſs'd harder on my heart, and more diſturb'd

The

The native calmneſs of my even ſpirit,
Than my near proſpect of the ready ſcaffold.

SPENCER.

Yet, my dear Lord, I view with aweful wonder
The firm ſerenity of ſoul you ſhew
On this hard teſt of human fortitude!

RUSSEL.

Reflect, my friend, that my impriſonment
Has made the fearful image of my fate
Familiar to my thought: It is ſurprize
That gives to Death his moſt appalling power;
To the clear eye of guiltleſs Contemplation
That gloomy ſpectre grows a gorgeous herald,
Whoſe trumpet ſounds the triumph of the ſoul,
And ſpeaks its entrance on the ſtage of glory.
How grand! how pregnant with delight and wonder,
Muſt be the change of ſcene from earth to heaven!—
What if a mortal, who had paſs'd his days
In the dim cavern of a noxious mine,
Worn with hard toil, where health-annoying vapours
Vext and confounded his imperfect ſenſe;
If ſuch a mortal ſuddenly were laid

On the bright ſummit of a lofty hill,
To taſte the balmy ſweetneſs of the morn,
And, for the firſt time, ſee the riſing ſun
Array this fair and ſmiling earth in all
The radiant lovelineſs of form and colour!——
O Spencer! if I felt for ſelf alone,
This period, deem'd the ſaddeſt of my life,
Could only fill my mind with heavenly joy;
But for my mourning friends, and moſt for her
Whoſe faithful love has many years to weep,
My falt'ring heart—now give it ſtrength, good Heaven!
For even now its hardeſt trial comes—
My Rachel, in the anguiſh of deſpair,
Returns to take a long and laſt farewell.

Enter Lady Ruſſel.

LADY RUSSEL.

Dear Ruſſel, I renounce illuſive hope!
And now muſt teach my weakneſs to ſuſtain
The heavieſt load of miſery that ever
Fell on the bleeding heart of helpleſs woman!—
The King denies thee, what the baſeſt felon

Aſks

Aſks not in vain, the reſpite of a day.
Could'ſt thou believe it? he and ſavage York
Are now, like blood-hounds, come to hunt thee hence,
And drive thee to thy death! they but allow me
A few ſhort minutes, in a laſt embrace
To claſp, to bleſs, and part with thee for ever!

RUSSEL.

Then may we part as we have liv'd, my Rachel,
In the pure dignity of perfect love,
Unſtain'd by weakneſs!

LADY RUSSEL.

Do not dread my tears;
They cannot fall to melt thy manly firmneſs,
For Heaven has ſteel'd me for this aweful hour.

RUSSEL.

Thou dear angelic ſpirit! 'tis from thee
That I have learnt the trueſt fortitude;
A courage built upon a heavenly baſis.—
O gracious Being! who has guided us
Through fourteen years of pure domeſtic bliſs,
The beſt and rareſt of thy gifts to man,
Accept, as tribute for thy bleſſings paſt,

Our meek ſubmiſſion in this trying hour
Of thy more dreadful pleaſure!—at thy call
I yield my guiltleſs life, nor would decline
To die for having ſtruggled to preſerve
Thy pureſt worſhip in my native land.
O that my blood might quench that fatal torch,
Of barbarous Superſtition, which begins
To ſhed once more its ſanguinary glare
Over this frighted iſle! Might Ruſſel prove
The laſt to periſh by oppreſſive power,
And the baſe ſentence of perverted law!—
Fall not my blood on the miſguided men
Whoſe fury ſheds it!—As I truely pardon
My ruthleſs enemies, ſo, Heaven! may'ſt thou
Take to the charge of thy heart-healing mercy
This my chief care, this deareſt, laſt concern
Of my departing ſoul, this ſpotleſs woman!

—LADY RUSSEL.

Let not thy fears for me, my generous Ruſſell!
Too fondly agitate thy feeling mind;
The gracious Power who bleſt us in each other,
Will not, I know, abandon utterly

An unoffending, weak, afflicted woman,
Dear to ſo pure a ſpirit, ſanctified
By the kind prayers of an expiring martyr!

RUSSEL.

My Love! I will not to thy care commend
Thy little orphans; for an angel's ſight
Cannot in tender vigilance ſurpaſs
The anxious mother, who ſurvives to ſhield
The infant pledges of our chaſte affection!
No, let me preſs a charge upon thy memory,
Where I moſt fear thy failure, thy dear ſelf;
Regard thy precious health, as the poſſeſſion
That I enjoin thee to preſerve and cheriſh.

LADY RUSSEL.

Thou guide and guardian of thy Rachel's life!
Though the dark grave muſt hide thee from my eyes,
Thy gentleneſs, thy love, thy truth, thy virtues,
Will ſtill, like faithful and protecting ſpirits,
Be ever preſent to my thought, and give
My grief-dejected mind new power to rear
The little idols of my widow'd heart.

RUSSEL.

They will have all, that youth requires, in thee;
The gentle friend, the fond, yet firm director,
Whoſe ſteady kindneſs, and rever'd perfection,
Makes diſcipline delight: their minds from thine
May copy all the virtues; chiefly two,
Of prime diſtinction, Truth and Fortitude,
The pillars of all human excellence!—
I bleſs thee now for many years of fondneſs;
But moſt for that ſublimity of love,
Which has diſdain'd to make my fate more bitter
By abject vain complaints and weak'ning tears.

LADY RUSSEL.

Refrain, I pray you, from this tender praiſe;
It will o'erthrow the firmneſs you commend,
And 'waken all the woman in my boſom.

RUSSEL.

Dear Rachel! as my boy approaches manhood,
Teach him to look upon his father's death
Rather as noble than unfortunate!
Tell him, that, dying by no juſt decree,
I deem'd it ſtill a happineſs that Heaven

Made

Made me a native of this generous iſle,
Which, though now darken'd by a tranſient cloud,
Is doom'd, I truſt, to be the radiant throne
Of ſettled Liberty and ſtedfaſt Faith;
Early infuſe into his youthful ſpirit,
As the ſure ground-work of all manly virtue,
A ſenſe of civil and religious freedom;
Give to his pliant mind true Engliſh temper,
Teach him to fear no Being but his God,
And to love nothing earthly more than England.

Enter an Attendant.

ATTENDANT.

My Lord, the officers!

RUSSEL.

They ſhall not wait.

LADY RUSSEL.

Inhuman haſte!—Do thou, great God! proportion
The patience of thy ſervants in diſtreſs
To the infernal malice of their foes!
Since thy unqueſtionable will permits
Such innocence to periſh on the ſcaffold,

Send the moſt ſoothing of thy heavenly ſpirits
To wait unſeen upon the dying martyr!
Take from this hideous form of Violent Death
His horrible attendants, Pain and Anguiſh!

RUSSEL.

O my kind Love! that quick undreaded ſtroke,
So ſoon to ſever this frail mortal frame,
Is but a feather's printleſs touch, compar'd
To this my deepeſt wound, which now I feel
In tearing thus my faithful heart from thine!
Each moment that we linger but increaſes
Our mutual pangs; then take in this embrace
My lateſt benediction!

LADY RUSSEL.

O, farewell!

RUSSEL.

Yet a laſt kiſs!—and for our little ones,
Bear thou to each this legacy of love!
Now we muſt part!—Farewell!

LADY RUSSEL.

Farewell for ever!

[*Exit* Lady Ruſſel.

RUSSEL.

RUSSEL.

Spencer! the bitterneſs of death is paſt,
And thou haſt nothing more to fear for Ruſſel!
Then quit him, thou kind friend, and be thy care
Devoted to the precious charge he leaves:
I pray attend that dear unhappy mourner;
Place her within my gentle ſiſter's arms,
And ſooth their mutual ſorrow!——Tell my father,
I ſhould have wiſh'd to claſp his hand once more,
But that I fear'd to ſhock his feeble age.

SPENCER.

Grief, my dear Lord, denies me utterance
Of all that I would ſay!—Farewell! my tears
And prompt obedience will, I truſt, to you,
Though mute interpreters, explain my heart.

RUSSEL.

Yet ſtop!—Thy Ruſſel has now done with time,
That heavy load to fooliſh Indolence,
But active Probity's prolific treaſure!
Take then this ſmall memorial of eſteem,
This little index of the paſſing hours;
For thou haſt wiſdom to improve their value,

And I am entering on eternity.

[*Giving his watch to* Spencer.

Stay not for thanks! follow thy weeping charge;
Haſten to her ſupport; and Heaven reward thee!

[*Exit* Spencer.

RUSSEL *(kneeling.)*

Thou only perfect and unfailing Source
Of all ſerenity, all ſtrength, all power,
In thy frail ſuppliant man! thou gracious God!
I bleſs thy mercy, which in bittereſt anguiſh
Has fortified my ſoul, and now diſpels
All fearful hurry from my even thoughts!
O comfort thou thoſe kind and tender beings,
To whom my death muſt prove a laſting wound!
Grant me to paſs my little reſidue
Of cloſing life with chearful conſtancy,
And take my willing ſpirit to thy boſom!

Enter Cavendiſh.

CAVENDISH.

Allow me, thou bleſt martyr! once again
To preſs thy hand, to bathe it with my teaſs,

And, in this agony of greedy ſorrow,
Catch from thy lips the laſt command of friendſhip!

RUSSEL.

My faithful Cavendiſh! I have but one,
One wiſh to utter that relates to earth;
And to thy truth I truſt for its completion:
Dying, I charge thee, by the love thou beareſt
To Ruſſel's honor and our country's welfare,
Quell, in the hearts of all who may lament me,
The frantic paſſion to revenge my death!
Wilt thou be mindful of this laſt injunction?

CAVENDISH.

If I neglect one dictate of thy virtue,
May Heaven, to puniſh me, take from my ſoul
The dear remembrance of our amity!

RUSSEL.

'Tis well:—thy promiſe ends my only fear.
Farewell, my gallant, generous boſom-friend!
Farewell!—ſtill think me living in my children,
Still in their little frames embrace thy Ruſſel!

[Ruſſel *departs, but after a ſhort pauſe returns.*

RUSSEL.

One thing there is that yet I wiſh to ſay.

CAVENDISH.

O ſpeak! for every accent of thy voice
Pierces my breaſt, and all thy words ſhall live
Graven as laws on my retentive heart!

RUSSEL.

Friend of my youth, I have for many years
Held a prime place within thy noble boſom,
And ſtudied all its rich and rare perfections,
The radiant virtues in fair order marſhall'd
Beneath the guidance of preſiding honor:
I've ſeen thee full of high and glorious thoughts
Towards this world; but pardon if I ſay,
That thy brave mind, to me, has ſeem'd to fail
In homage to the ſovereignty of Heaven.

CAVENDISH.

Thou godlike monitor! in ſuch a moment
To feel for my offences!

RUSSEL.

[Do not wonder

At the calm temper of thy dying friend;
Uſe thy own ſpotleſs and exalted ſpirit
To commune more with Heaven, and thou wilt find
The bleſſed habit of conſidering
That we are acting in our Maker's eye,
Arms the unſhrinking ſoul for every ſcene.
Weigh well the powers of ſimple piety,
Make it the key-ſtone in thy arch of virtue,
And it will keep that graceful fabric firm,
Though all the ſtorms of fortune burſt upon it.
Yet farther would I preſs this counſel to thee,
But time forbids me.—Once again, farewell!
Long be thy life, and crown'd with every bleſſing,
Till in its peaceful cloſe we meet in heaven. [*Exit.*

CAVENDISH.

Smiling he's gone to triumph o'er Oppreſſion
By brave endurance! while my voice, ſuſpended
By anguiſh, love, and wonder, wanted power
To breathe one laſt adieu!—While yet he lives,
I cannot bear to be divided from him:
No, I will follow—I will fondly gaze
On the dear model of conſummate virtue

E'en

E'en to his lateſt moment; I will ſee
His heavenly patience meet the murd'rous axe;
I will behold his death, though in the fight
My tortur'd eyeſtrings burſt with agony. [*Exit.*

Enter York *with an* Officer.

YORK.

At length I have prevail'd!—the traitor dies,
Spite of the weakneſs in my wavering brother.
This is indeed an hour of exultation!
To all the friends of our true ancient faith
This public fall of her arch enemy
Is a ſure omen that ſhe ſoon will riſe
In all her gorgeous pomp of elder time,
And from the turbulence of hereſy
Clear this recover'd iſle.

OFFICER.

Her faireſt hope
Lives in the ſpirit of your Highneſs' ſeed.

YORK.

Yet this inſidious Ruſſel is ſo dear
To the deluded vulgar, I ſtill dread—
A ſtruggle for his reſcue!—Say, my friend,

Haſt

Haſt thou arrang'd our private partizans
At proper intervals to guard the ſcaffold,
And keep the gaping multitude in awe,
Thoſe reſty knaves, who, in this factious land,
Are ever ready to engage in riot,
And hazard life for every bold impoſtor,
Or ſubtle demagogue who raves on freedom?

OFFICER.

Fear not, my Lord! the voice of loud Sedition
Will hardly dare to breathe a ſingle murmur
Upon her idol's fall.

YORK.

And haſt thou ſettled
A clear ſucceſſion of immediate ſignals,
Which may, as Ruſſel drops, tranſport to me
A quick aſſurance that his head is off?

OFFICER.

Your Highneſs, in the minute of its fall,
Will be appriz'd 'tis fallen by the ſound
Of fifes now ſtation'd in this armoury.

YORK.

'Tis well; my truſty friend, I thank thy care:

I cannot

I cannot reſt till I am ſatisfied
The heretic has loſt all power to hurt us.

BEDFORD *(entering in extreme haſte.)*

Yet pardon, yet preſerve him, princely York!
I know thy word is able to ſuſpend
The lifted axe.

YORK.

Away, thou weak old man!

BEDFORD.

Spurn not my prayer! its object is thy peace
Not leſs than mine:——by all thy trembling hopes
Of future greatneſs and ſecure dominion,
Haſte thou to ſnatch him from impending fate!
If, in theſe moments of extreme deſpair,
Thy pity ſaves my ſon, thou wilt appear
As the bright delegate of heavenly mercy!

[*The fifes ſound.*

YORK.

Away! the ſound thou heareſt is a ſignal
That the juſt rigor of the law has fallen
Upon his finiſh'd life.

BEDFORD.

BEDFORD.

O my loſt child!—

But he is happy in the fellowſhip
Of ſaints, who to his higher purity
Pay bleſſed homage—his deliver'd ſpirit
Gives a new impulſe to my lifeleſs heart:
His ſufferings all are ended; but this hour,
Which ſees them cloſe, for thee, relentleſs York!
Beholds a train of dark calamities,
The ſpreading offspring of thy cruelty,
Riſe into being!

YORK.

Go, retire, old man,
And heal thy ſhatter'd mind: I have not leiſure
To hear the ravings of diſtracted age.

[*Exit* York, *with the* Officer.

BEDFORD.

'Tis not the frenzy of a weak old man
That now proclaims thy fate, inhuman bigot,
Ruſhing through guiltleſs blood to thy deſtruction!
It is the ſpirit of my angel ſon!
He for a moment leaves the heavenly choir,

(Whoſe ready harps ſhall uſher him to glory)
To drown a father's anguiſh in this viſion
Of ſoul-poſſeſſing preſcience!—yes, 'tis he
Who now preſents to my aſtoniſh'd eye
Theſe crowding images!—I ſee thee now,
Inſatiate York! inveſted with that crown
For which thy barbarous ambition panted;
I ſee it fall from thy unkingly head,
Shaking with fear's vile palſy!—in thy terror
I ſee thee ſue, imperious, abject ſpirit!
To the inſulted Bedford, but in vain.
Thy power, that higheſt truſt of Heaven, abus'd,
Paſſes from thee! The cruel blood-ſtain'd tyrant
Wanders a wretched exile! This wrong'd iſland
Emerges from the darkneſs of Oppreſſion!—
Hail, ſcenes of triumph to all Engliſh hearts!
Hail, thou bright feſtival of ſettled Freedom!
I ſee and bleſs thy firm eſtabliſhment.
And hark! the juſtice of a patriot king,
Uniting with a grateful nation's voice,
Turns the baſe ſentence of my murder'd Ruſſel

To a fair record of ſoul-ſoothing honor,
And hails me glorious in my matchleſs ſon!

Enter Cavendiſh.

CAVENDISH.

'Tis paſt, my Lord! I have beheld him ſeal
A life of virtue with a death of glory!

BEDFORD.

And thou canſt tell me, dying, he appear'd,
E'en as he liv'd, a model to mankind!

CAVENDISH.

Never did martyr with more lovely grace
Part from a world unworthy to poſſeſs him!
To the ſurrounding crowd he mildly ſpoke
A few ſhort words of pardon to his foes,
With fervent benediction to his country;
Commending to the hearts of all who heard him,
A love of peace and purified religion;
Then with a chearful readineſs invited
The ſtroke of death! I ſaw the unhappy man,
Who with a trembling arm lifted the axe
O'er his unſhaken victim, in his tremor

Meaſuring the neck to ſtrike his even blow;
I ſaw him raze the ſkin! and in that moment
The cheek of Ruſſel held its native hue
Unblanc'd with fear!—it was a ſight to turn
The grief of friendſhip to idolatry!
And your paternal ſorrow into pride!

BEDFORD.

Dear Cavendiſh! I will not wound his ſpirit,
His gallant ſpirit, by unmanly mourning:
No, I have pride, ſuch pride as Heaven approves;
Nor would I now exchange my murder'd Ruſſel
For any living ſon in Chriſtendom!

CAVENDISH.

Bleſs this fond firmneſs of the Engliſh father!
It penetrates and chears my aching heart.—
Come, my dear Lord, let us retire from hence,
To ſoothe yet fonder ſorrow, weeping now
In ſcenes which he has hallow'd by his care,
In his paſt days of ſocial happineſs:
There let us ſit, and ſtill with ſad delight
Talk o'er his numerous virtues: they ſhall be
The theme of every tongue! and, ages hence,

Still fix the love of every Engliſh ſpirit!
Then, if the voice of Learning would compare
What rich Antiquity and Modern Time
Have ſeen of public virtue, while the hand
Of Glory juſtly in her balance throws
The gather'd worthies of the Pagan world,
England ſhall boaſt her own ſuperior wealth,
And poiſe the rival ſcale with Ruſſel's name!

THE

THE

MAUSOLEUM;

A COMEDY,

OF THREE ACTS,

IN RHYME.

Perſons of the Drama.

CAREY.

JASPER.

RUMBLE.

FACIL.

TROPE.

GERRARD, the Butler.

LADY SOPHIA SENTIMENT, Widow of Sir Simon Sentiment, a wealthy Merchant.

FRANCES, Siſter to Jasper, and a Relation of the deceaſed Sir Simon.

MRS. RUMBLE.

Servants, *&c.*

SCENE, *the magnificent Villa of* Lady Sophia.

THE MAUSOLEUM.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Carey *and* Frances.

FRANCES.

PRAY temper with patience your warm indignation,
And treat with more mercy my tender relation:
Becauſe with your paſſions her whims interfere,
To her foibles, dear Carey, you're groſsly ſevere.

CAREY.

My patience, ſweet Frances, I own is exhauſted:
She will wed the firſt ſuitor by whom ſhe's accoſted,

Though in widowhood's dainty vagaries, her pride
Forbids her fair couſin to ſhine as a bride;
And keeps us, my Love, from that altar away,
Where Hymen with juſtice upbraids our delay.
But, in noble contempt of your unſettled dower,
Let us ſeize on the bliſs that is plac'd in our power;
And, if ſuch artful vanities yield her relief,
Leave my Lady to play off freſh fountains of grief,
While we, my ſweet girl! paſs our happier youth
In delights that are hallow'd by Nature and Truth:
Though my income is ſmall, with your prudent direction,
Dear Fanny——

FRANCES.

I'm pleas'd with this proof of affection:
Yet before we our union, dear Carey, complete,
As your love is ſo ardent—let mine be diſcreet.
No honeſt return of regard ſhould I feel,
Could I ſuffer your heart, in its generous zeal,
To abandon a portion your bride ſhould obtain,
And hazard by hurry what patience will gain.
'Tis unlucky, my couſin, Sir Simon, forgot
To ſpecify what he deſign'd as my lot:

But I know this omiſſion, by which I am left,
At her Ladyſhip's mercy, of fortune bereft,
Was the work of Old Vellum, whoſe foreſight and ſkill
Were employ'd for himſelf, when he made the Knight's will.
Yet her Ladyſhip ſays, that my couſin told her
The ſum that he meant upon me to confer;
And though ſhe delays, from a delicate whim,
Leſt our marriage ſhould ſeem diſreſpectful to him——

CAREY.

Good God! my dear Fanny, how can you defend her?
To refinement and faith ſhe's an empty pretender.
Have not twelve months elaps'd from Sir Simon's interment?
Yet her ſorrow ſtill bubbles in ludicrous ferment;
Though the farce of her grief, as our friends have all ſaid,
Is addreſs'd to the living much more than the dead;
And her vanity means, though ſhe prizes not pelf,
To keep you unmarried, and marry herſelf.

FRANCES.

Indeed you miſtake all her harmleſs intentions;
She will certainly give me the fortune ſhe mentions;

I know her kind heart, and its pure inclination.

CAREY.

Say rather, we know her abſurd affectation:
And as for your portion, my dear, I as ſoon
Shall expect an eſtate to drop out of the moon,
As to ſee you receive from my Lady a ſhilling;
Allowing, indeed, that her heart may be willing,
She ſoon will have nothing, I fear, to beſtow,
So profuſe is ſhe grown in her whimſical woe.
On the new Mauſoleum what ſums does ſhe waſte!
That fantaſtical fabric of barbarous taſte;
Where all decorations that art can deviſe,
To adorn the proud tombs of the valiant and wiſe,
Are mix'd o'er the bones of a ſimple old cit,
Who diſplay'd not a ſparkle of valor or wit;
Who though rich, paſs'd, I think, with ſmall comfort through life,
A mere ſlave to the whims of his high-blooded wife.

FRANCIS.

That prepoſterous vault I have view'd with concern!
And have cried and have laugh'd o'er Sir Simon's rich urn:
But

But at length, having ſtudy'd her Ladyſhip's trim,
And loving her virtue in ſpite of her whim,
I've a ſcheme, that, I think, with ſucceſs will be crown'd,
On this folly itſelf her correction to found;
By indulging her foible, that foible to baniſh,
And make all her mournful abſurdity vaniſh.

CAREY.

To your judgment, dear Fanny, I often ſubmit,
And much could I hope from your goodneſs and wit;
Yet I think you can't make, in her youth's giddy ſeaſon,
Such a vain wanton widow a creature of reaſon.

FRANCES.

You judges of nature, and lords of creation,
Howe'er you pretend to profound ſpeculation,
Are exceedingly apt your wiſe ſelves to deceive
In the judgments you paſs on the daughters of Eve;
And moſt when you reckon, in every tranſaction,
One indelicate foible their ſole ſpring of action.
My Lady Sophia you greatly miſtake;
By nature ſhe's neither a prude nor a rake:
At preſent, I own, ſhe appears too demure;
But though her heart's tender, her boſom is pure:

To

To a ſtrong underſtanding ſhe makes no pretence,
But has many mild virtues, and does not want ſenſe:
One foible alone has o'erclouded her mind,
The foible of ſeeming ſupremely refin'd:
But if I ſucceed, this ſlight fault ſhe will mend,
And you'll find her a worthy agreeable friend.

CAREY.

You may ſay of her purity what you think fit,
But her caſe one ſpecific alone will admit.
Believe me, whene'er a young widow's ſo prim,
And by quaint affectation ſo cramp'd in each limb,
A new huſband alone, by his pliant embrace,
Can reſtore her ſtarch'd form to its natural grace:
Is this, my fair Quack! the new noſtrum you've got?

FRANCES.

Indeed you ſhan't hear any part of my plot,
Till I know its ſucceſs.

CAREY.

Ah! my dear, I'm afraid
This is ſome coy device my requeſt to evade,
And to keep the wiſh'd day of our wedding ſtill diſtant.

FRANCES.

No; in truth, by the aid of a ſecret aſſiſtant,

I've

I've a plan of great moment in high agitation,
Which may happily end all our various vexation:
Allow me three days for its perfect digeſtion,
And if in that time you will aſk me no queſtion,
I promiſe thenceforth, without murmur or ſtrife,
To obey your commands for the reſt of my life.

CAREY.

I gladly ſubſcribe to this bargain of bliſs;
So allow me to ſeal the kind bond with a kiſs!
Remember, three days; I can't add a day more,
And ſhall fancy thoſe three in duration threeſcore.

FRANCES.

O they'll paſs very quick:—much amus'd you will be
With the three rival Bards whom to-day we ſhall ſee;
To whom my ſad couſin oblig'd me to write
For ſepulchral inſcriptions in praiſe of her Knight:
They have ſent each an epitaph hither before 'em,
And are coming themſelves with all ſolemn decorum.
As each, without conteſt, expects here the laurel,
On her Ladyſhip's judgment they'll probably quarrel:
As you know the whole group, you muſt wait on the choir,
To ſoothe the iraſcible ſons of the Lyre.

CAREY.

CAREY.

As to Facil and Trope, if they're hurt, I'll engage
That one glance of your eyes will extinguish their rage:
You will find them two chearful and good-humour'd lads;
And, whether their Pegaſus gallops or pads,
It will pleaſe me, I own, if her Ladyſhip's fancies
May tend to recruit their declining finances:
But for ſplenetic Rumble, who, grandly abſurd,
Never ſpeaks without uſing a ſix-footed word,
I care not how much he is mortified here.

FRANCES.

But the length of his words hits her Ladyſhip's ear.

CAREY.

His ſtiff phraſes indeed may accord with her ſorrow,
Yet his ſpleen will inſult her ere this time to-morrow;
For often he'll call, with quaint arrogant vanity,
Every head but his own the abode of inanity:
Becauſe a great author's defects he has caught,
He vainly pretends to his vigor of thought;
Though, on ſimilar grounds, he as well might ſuppoſe,
That, becauſe ſome dark ſpots may be ſeen on his noſe,

His

His face has the luſtre and force of the ſun.

FRANCES.

In our chorus of Bards I am glad he is one,
For I'm curious, I own, the ſtrange elf to ſurvey;
Though I'm rather afraid of his wife, who, they ſay,
Reads all the rough verſes her huſband has penn'd,
Till ſhe ſtuns every ear ſhe can tempt to attend.
She's to come with her Poet.

CAREY.

I fancy they're here,
For I think I've the hum of his rhymes in my ear.

FRANCES.

No, no; 'tis her Ladyſhip, mightily ſmitten
With the high-ſounding epitaph Rumble has written.

Enter Lady Sophia *(reading)*.

LADY SOPHIA.

" This doleful domicile of duſt contains
" Sir Simon Sentiment's inert remains;
" Though Death's cold ſtroke infrigidate his frame,
" Commerce reſounds his emporetic name."

Ah, my friends, here is verſe truly grand and pathetic!
How exceedingly fine is the word emporetic!—
Why, Carey! you ſeem quite untouch'd by its beauty;
Of friendſhip, I fear, you forget the laſt duty:
You two giddy creatures, though both tender-hearted,
Think more of yourſelves than of my dear departed.

CAREY.

As your Ladyſhip chuſes to preſs me ſo hard,
I confeſs, though his memory ſtill I regard,
That my thoughts from Sir Simon will frequently roam;
And I hope, when you've deck'd his funereal dome,
Your Ladyſhip's mind may, by Nature's direction,
Aſſume a more lively and chearful complexion;
That you'll mix once again——

LADY SOPHIA.

Never, Carey! no, never!
No time from his grave my devotion ſhall ſever;
In my eye the fond tear of remembrance ſhall ſwim,
And each ſigh of my ſoul ſhall be ſacred to him!

CAREY.

Conſider, dear Madam! that cuſtom and reaſon
Preſcribe to our ſorrows a natural ſeaſon;

You

You have mourn'd like a model of conjugal truth,
Now attend to the claims of your beauty and youth;
In the bloom of your graces——

LADY SOPHIA.

Hold, hold, you wild thing!
In your fancy, I find, groſs ideas will ſpring;
'Tis the fault of you men;—ere I chaſten'd his mind,
My Sir Simon himſelf to that failing inclin'd:
But I taught him to change the looſe laugh of futility,
For the ſweet melting tear of refin'd ſenſibility,
Till through his mild frame ſuch pure tenderneſs ran—
To ſuch delicate ſoftneſs I brought the dear man—
He would weep o'er the withering leaf of a roſe,
And ſmile at the thorn though it wounded his noſe.—
Ah, my gentle Sir Simon!

FRANCES.

Indeed, he was ſuch,
That your thoughts cannot dwell on his image too much.

LADY SOPHIA.

Your ſoothing, kind ſympathy charms me, my dear:
I now truſt you will wait till the end of next year;

Nor with Hymen's feſtivity, groſs and indecent,
Profane our chaſte ſorrow, ſo graceful and recent.

CAREY (*aſide to* Frances).

How can you ſo flatter her curſt affectation?
Between you I'm really half mad with vexation.

LADY SOPHIA.

As you, my good girl! with ſuch feeling attend,
When o'er the dear tomb of Sir Simon I bend,
That your thoughts may not roam when our duty we pay
To that moſt precious piece of inanimate clay,
That you may not omit o'er his aſhes to ſigh,
In conſidering what wedding-cloaths you muſt buy,
I've determin'd, my dear, as I think it your due,
To reſign all my colour'd apparel to you;
To wear it again I indeed am unable,
And on earth while I linger my garb ſhall be ſable.

[*Speaking to a* Servant *behind the ſcene.*]

Jenny, bring in the cheſt that I bid you prepare.

FRANCES (*aſide to* Carey).

What d'ye think of this ſingular preſent?

CAREY.

O rare!

Her criſis is coming, without much delay;
There might have been doubts had ſhe fix'd upon grey:
But a vow to wear black all the reſt of her life
Is a ſtrong indication ſhe'll ſoon be a wife.

[*Two* Servants *bring in a large Cheſt.*]

LADY SOPHIA (*to* Frances).

I have told you, my dear, that, refin'd in my joy,
The array of affection I ne'er could deſtroy:
Theſe are garments unſoil'd, that I beg you to take,
Thus preſerv'd for the conqueſt they help'd me to make.
In the ſweet days of courtſhip theſe garments I wore,
Vain memorials of pleaſure that now is no more!
Of thoſe dear days of triumph you'll now ſee the trophy,
When Sir Simon firſt call'd me angelical Sophy:—
The fond recollection ſubdues my ſoft breaſt!

FRANCES.

Dear Madam, forbear then to open the cheſt!

LADY SOPHIA.

No, no, my good girl; I will ſhew you the whole,
And how colours expreſs'd various ſhades in my ſoul;
In ſoft variegation I vied with the dove,
And reveal'd by my dreſs the gradations of love.

Here

Here is, firſt, a cold brown—in this gown I was nice,
And repell'd my warm ſwain with the chillneſs of ice;
But growing more ſoft, in this azure attire
I allow'd him with hope to enliven deſire;
In this pale lilach luteſtring he found me relent;
And this roſe-colour'd ſilk was the bluſh of conſent.
O I ne'er ſhall forget——

GERRARD *(entering)*.

Would your Ladyſhip chuſe
To receive Mr. Rumble?

CAREY.

The Bard and his Muſe!

LADY SOPHIA.

No, not for the wealth that's below the chaſte moon,
Till I meet all the Bards in the ſable ſaloon:
By his ſudden arrival I'm ſadly confounded,
And ſhould faint if he ſaw me with colours ſurrounded!
To Miſs Jaſper's apartment away with this cheſt;—
Dear Frances, and Carey, pray wait on my gueſt,
Till my poor ſhatter'd nerves are a little compos'd,
And the freſh-bleeding wound of my boſom is clos'd.

Stay, Gerrard.—If cards ſhould be call'd for to-night,
Place the new japann'd tables alone in my ſight;
For the pool of Quadrille ſet the black-bugle diſh,
And remember you bring us the ebony fiſh.

[*Exeunt* Lady Sophia *and* Gerrard.

FRANCES.

What the deuce ſhall I do with the wife of the Poet?
She may ruin my ſcheme, if ſhe happen to know it:
She may pry——

CAREY.

Never fear it! I'll venture a wager
That the rhymes of her huſband will fully engage her:
You have ſeen a proud Bantam crow over a pen,
Where a ſmall egg has dropt from his favorite hen,
He crows, and he flutters, and ſtruts round the yard:
So engroſs'd by her joy is the wife of a Bard;
And by ſimilar buſtle attention ſhe begs,
And crows o'er her partner's poetical eggs.
But here come little Partlet and old Chanticleer.

Enter Mr. *and* Mrs. Rumble.

CAREY.

Mr. Rumble, I'm happy in ſeeing you here.

Mrs.

Mrs. Rumble,—Miſs Jaſper;——you know, Ma'am, her
brother——
And you, Ladies, will ſoon be well known to each other.

MR. RUMBLE.

Though we meet in the houſe of refin'd lamentation,
In your preſence, I feel, Sir, ſome exhilaration;
Since I in this ſpot as a ſtranger appear,
I rejoice in a friend who domeſticates here.
My Lady is lodg'd in a ſumptuous manſion,
And I'm pleas'd with her park's evaneſcent expanſion;
As my wife has a taſte for the grand and ſtupendous,
I am glad I complied with her wiſh to attend us.

MISS JASPER.

You have had, Ma'am, I hope, an agreeable ride;
Our proſpects are pleaſant on every ſide,
And our roads are ſoo good——

MRS. RUMBLE.

That you'll wonder to learn
We were ſtopt on our way by an odd overturn.

MISS JASPER.

Indeed! you ſurprize me. I hope that no harm
Has enſued from the accident, ſave your alarm——
But how could it happen?

MRS.

MRS. RUMBLE.

Sometimes, on the road,
My dear Mr. Rumble compoſes an ode;
For he ſays, in ſuch motion his fancy ſhines moſt;
And all true lyric poets, you know, travel poſt:
But a chaiſe-boy, alas! is a ſad ignoramus;
And the poor honeſt booby, whoſe blunder o'ercame us,
Miſtook a Pindarical ejaculation
For a horrible, vulgar, profane execration,
And, turning to ſtare at my dear Mr. Rumble,
Drove againſt a ſteep hillock, which gave us a tumble.

MISS JASPER.

A moſt cruel event! whence, I fear, we may loſe
The unfortunate fruit of the terrified Muſe:
'Twas indeed moſt unlucky!

MRS. RUMBLE.

Dear Ma'am, not at all:
Such a genius is not to be cruſh'd by a fall;
The accident brighten'd his fancy, and on it
He gallantly gave me an amorous ſonnet.
As I know you love verſe——

MR. RUMBLE.

Mrs. Rumble, I vow
This diſplay of my trifles I cannot allow;
You for ever miſtake, to my endleſs vexation,
Gay Levity's ſparkle for Wit's converſation.

MRS. RUMBLE.

Ah, you dear, modeſt man! in a napkin you'd hide
The talent my love muſt contemplate with pride;
As Miſs Jaſper, I'm ſure, is a lady of taſte,
She ſhall ſee ſome ſweet things that I pack'd up in haſte,
A few ſatires and odes——

[*Takes out an enormous pocket-book ſtuffed with papers.*

MR. RUMBLE.

As you dread my diſpleaſure,
Put up that red volume!

MRS. RUMBLE.

What, bury my treaſure!
Indeed I muſt read one ſublime compoſition.

MR. RUMBLE.

Mrs. Rumble! the part of a wife is ſubmiſſion.—
Silly woman! to whom for my ſins I am yok'd,
With pulveriz'd gravel you almoſt are choak'd;

And,

And, fatigu'd with vehicular dilaceration,
You would murder my verſes by rough recitation.

MRS. RUMBLE.

No, indeed; do but hear me one ſtanza rehearſe;
'Tis my favorite ode.

MR. RUMBLE.

As you grow ſo perverſe,
To preſerve my own temper from exacerbation,
I muſt thus ſtop your organs of vociferation.

[*Lays his hand on her lips.*

MRS. RUMBLE.

Well, my dear, I defer it to ſome fitter time,
And I kiſs the ſweet hand that has written ſuch rhyme.

MISS JASPER.

Your connubial obedience, dear Ma'am, I admire;
But I'm ſure your fatigues ſome refreſhment require—
Give me leave to attend you.

MRS. RUMBLE.

It gives me concern
To trouble you, Ma'am; but I hope to return
Your obliging attention, ſo kind and polite,
By a peep at a ſatire which ne'er ſaw the light.

[*Exit* Miſs Jaſper *with* Mrs. Rumble.

CAREY.

Mr. Rumble, you're bleſt in an excellent wife,
That ſuperlative prize in the lott'ry of life;
The vow of the altar ſhe riſes above,
And adds admiration to duty and love.

MR. RUMBLE.

My wife has, I think, the right feminine nerve:
Her ſex was created to wonder and ſerve;
As their minds have from nature no ponderous powers,
They have nothing to do but to venerate ours.

CAREY.

O fie! can you eſtimate woman ſo low?
To our fair female authors pray think what we owe.

MR. RUMBLE.

I cannot read one, Sir, without oſcitation:
They don't underſtand antithetic vibration;
Their ideas have nothing of height and profundity,
Their conceptions want vigor, their periods rotundity;
Their truth is too ſtale, or too feeble their fiction,
And I cannot endure their anomalous diction:
But enough of theſe garrulous waſters of ink—
Her Ladyſhip likes my inſcription, I think;

[Exit Miſs Jalper with Mrs. Rumble.

That

That lugubrious poem no critic ſhall garble,
And, I truſt, you can ſhew it me graven on marble.

CAREY.

It would pleaſe me to give you that pleaſure, dear Sir;
But, in truth, on this point there's a little demur,
Her Ladyſhip means to conſult on the caſe.

MR. RUMBLE.

What, Sir! is my poem expos'd to diſgrace?
Her critical quacks does this woman engage,
To ſlaſh my ſound verſe with empirical rage?

CAREY.

Believe me, good Sir, all the homage that's due
To poetical genius ſhe offers to you;
But her Ladyſhip's love for Sir Simon is ſuch,
She thinks that he cannot be honour'd too much;
And, to give all his virtues their due celebration,
She from diverſe poetical pens of our nation
Has a cargo of epitaphs.

MR. RUMBLE.

Hah! is it ſo!
Are there rivals to ſhoot in Apollo's ſtrong bow?

This

This ſhould have been told me before;—but no matter:
My concurrents, perhaps, may more laviſhly flatter,
Yet in funeral ſong they can't equal my tone;
Where Pope has miſcarried, I triumph alone.—
Pray who are theſe Bards that with me are to cope?

CAREY.

I think you're acquainted with Facil and Trope.

MR. RUMBLE.

What, Facil! whoſe verſe is the thread of tenuity,
That fellow diſtinguiſh'd by flippant fatuity,
Who nonſenſe and rhyme can inceſſantly mingle,
A poet—if poetry's only a jingle.

CAREY.

Poor Facil wants force; yet may frequently pleaſe
By a light airy mixture of mirth and of eaſe;
But Trope's lofty muſe has a higher pretenſion.

MR. RUMBLE.

Sir! Trope is a rhymer devoid of invention,
Who talks in a high ſtrutting ſtyle of the ſtars,
And the eagle of Jove, and the chariot of Mars;
And pompouſly tells, in elaborate lines,
That now the moon gliſtens, and now the ſun ſhines.

CAREY.

CAREY.

How ſevere, my good friend, are you Bards to each other!
Yet if each would indulgently look on a brother,
For your general honor——

MR. RUMBLE.

I cannot agree
That theſe fellows have aught homogeneous with me;
To contend with ſuch ſcribblers I deem a diſgrace,
And my dignity bids me abandon the place:
With her Ladyſhip's judgment I mean not to quarrel,
But ſhall leave her to crown any monkey with laurel.

CAREY.

Mr. Rumble! in points ſo exceedingly nice
I do not preſume to obtrude my advice;
But allow me to mention, before you depart,
What may tend to encourage your liberal art.
Sir Simon, you know, had a paſſion for fame,
And left a large ſum to eternize his name
By ſome ſtructure of note; yet he never ſaid what:
So a grand Mauſoleum is rais'd on this ſpot,
At ſo vaſt an expence that my Lady, I find,
Has ſurpaſt what the Knight for the building deſign'd;

The ſuperfluous coſt, be it great as it may,
From her own private purſe ſhe deſigns to defray;
Though an annual fund by the will is adjuſted,
With the guidance of which ſhe is alſo entruſted;
But from this, as I hear, ſhe has form'd an intention
To give the beſt epitaph-writer a penſion.

MR. RUMBLE.

Has ſhe ſo!—'tis a gracious, effulgent deſign;
I proteſt, of her judgment I highly opine.
Her face has been chiefly the ſubject of praiſe;
But a ſplendor of intellect now ſhe diſplays.
I cannot abruptly depart from a ſcene
Whoſe miſtreſs diſcovers the mind of a queen,
Nor rudely deſert, though my time is precarious,
A lady whoſe graces are ſo multifarious:
But pray, leſt ſome puppy ſhould here circumvent me,
To her Ladyſhip can't you directly preſent me?
Though I fear, ſince my fall, I am hardly ſo clean as
A Bard ſhould be ſeen by a female Mæcenas.

GREY.

Never fear!—in your coat there is not ſo much duſt
As to blind the bright eye that to merit is juſt.

If you'll ſtep in this room, which is call'd the Apollo,
And wait a few minutes, I'll ſpeedily follow,
And acquaint you how ſoon we may hope for admiſſion;—
My Lady loves form, in her preſent condition:
To amuſe yourſelf there you'll, however, be able,
For you'll find all the epitaphs rang'd on the table.

MR. RUMBLE.

Are they ſo!—it is well!—I indeed love to ſlaſh
An inane poetaſter's incongruous traſh. [*Exit.*

CAREY.

There I'll venture to leave the old cynical Rumble,
The prey he has ſeiz'd to growl over and mumble.
If this Bard, whom my Lady regards as her darling,
Has infus'd in his brothers his talent of ſnarling,
I think ſhe will find little room to admire
The harmony form'd by her Lyrical Choir.—
But lo! the kind Muſe an example now ſends,
That two mortals at once may be poets and friends.

Enter Facil *and* Trope.

CAREY.

My dear lads of Parnaſſus! you're welcome together;
I am glad you aſſociate, like birds of a feather,

That fools may not cry, "Every Bard hates a brother,
"And Poets, like Pike, are the prey of each other."
How fare ye, my friends? have you proſper'd of late?
I hope each has rais'd his Parnaſſian eſtate!
In our laſt converſation I heard ye lament
That your farms on the mountain produc'd a low rent.

FACIL.

In truth 'tis a niggardly ſoil, at the beſt,
As I and my brother can truly atteſt;
But with hopes of a new golden æra, my friend,
On your patroneſs here we are come to attend:
To encourage the arts ſhe has ſpirit and ſenſe,
And we're told, my dear Carey, her wealth is immenſe.

TROPE.

In fortune and ſoul ſhe's a queen, 'tis agreed,
And of genius as fond as Chriſtina the Swede;
For the Public's dull taſte ſhe, we truſt, will conſole us,
And make our poor Helicon rich as Pactolus.

FACIL.

Perhaps, my dear Carey, we owe to your care
The favor of this truly liberal Fair.

You are, doubtleſs, appriz'd that my Lady requires—

CAREY.

I know ſhe has paid due reſpect to your lyres;
Yet, indeed, on that title no thanks can I claim;
You're indebted alone to your common friend, Fame:
Her Ladyſhip knows with what ſpirit you write,
And has begg'd your two Muſes to honor her Knight;
And, I truſt, to your mutual advantage and joy,
She'll reward the rare talents ſhe wiſh'd to employ.
But be not too ſanguine;—I know how you Bards
Build the fabric of Hope like a caſtle of cards:
Entre nous, our good Lady is odd in her taſte,
Tho' her mind is, no doubt, with munificence grac'd;
Perhaps to one Bard ſhe'll be laviſhly kind,
And appear to the other as utterly blind.
Then let each be prepar'd.

FACIL.

So we are, my good friend,
And by mutual ſupport ſhall each other defend:
To tell you a ſecret, we both wrote in haſte,
And ſtrangers alike to her Ladyſhip's taſte;

But agreed, as our purſes are equally low,
To divide what on either ſhe deigns to beſtow.

CAREY.

The compact is friendly; I wiſh from my heart
That all who purſue the poetical art
Would learn, from you two, their mean rage to ſuppreſs,
And not rave at the ſight of a rival's ſucceſs.

FACIL.

There, indeed, they may copy from Trope and from me:
From envy, thank Heaven! we are happily free;
We rally each other as much as we pleaſe;—
I laugh at his figures—he laughs at my eaſe;
Yet with rancour we ne'er try each other to hit,
But value Benevolence far above Wit.
The art we ſtill doat on has ruin'd us both;
Yet to quit the deceiver we're equally loth:
From Commerce and Law we were led to retire
By the ſplendid illuſions that wait on the Lyre;
And though each has obtain'd a fair portion of praiſe,
We have no golden fruit in our chaplet of bays;
Still we look without ſpleen on our gains and our loſſes,
Each endear'd to the other by ſimilar croſſes.

CAREY.

CAREY.

In truth, my dear Bards, you're good-humour is rare;
You're philoſophers both, and a ſingular pair:
With what excellent temper I've heard you rehearſe
A malicious burleſque of your innocent verſe!

FACIL.

O, with me 'tis a rule not to quarrel with thoſe
Who attack what I ſcribble in rhyme or in proſe;
To ſkirmiſh with you, how unjuſt ſhould I be,
If, perchance, of my verſes you don't think with me;
When, to tell you the truth, I'm ſo various an elf,
I have twenty opinions about them myſelf!

CAREY.

What an honeſt confeſſion!

FACIL.

—'Tis perfectly true;
Yet my works, I muſt own, I too rarely review;
And too quick in their birth are the brats of my brain:
My Muſe is no parent inur'd to long pain,
Who dandles a rickety chit while it lives,
And loves it the more for the trouble it gives;

She with lively diſpatch, like a provident mother,
Soon as one child is born thinks of rearing another.—
But enough of a jade that is merely ideal;
Let us talk of a female, kind, lovely, and real;
An inſpirer of ſomething much ſweeter than verſe,
And, I hope, with a few thouſand pounds in her purſe:
I allude, my good friend, to Miſs Jaſper, your flame;
But, perhaps, ſhe no longer is known by that name,
And has wiſely exchang'd it for Carey.

CAREY.

Not ſo;
The day of our wedding you'll certainly know,
As I hope that your Muſe will the altar attend
With a rapturous ode on the bliſs of your friend.

FACIL.

I accept the gay office with infinite glee;—
But at preſent, I hope, the fair Nymph we ſhall ſee:
Trope and I were the intimate friends of her brother;
What a genius was he!—I ne'er knew ſuch another:
At ſchool we firſt ſaw him his talent diſplay;
I remember he modell'd our figures in clay.

The trade of a ſculptor we thought not his fate,
But ſuppos'd he'd have half of Sir Simon's eſtate!

CAREY.

So he would, had not Vellum's more provident care,
When he made the Knight's will, nam'd himſelf as his heir.
My Lady, indeed, has the rents for her life,
But to Vellum yields half if again ſhe's a wife;
And if without iſſue her Ladyſhip dies,
All this ample eſtate is old Latitat's prize.

FACIL.

And what ſays poor Jaſper, that ſpirited lad?
Faith, I think ſuch a will might have driven him mad!
Though engag'd by his art, he, I'm ſure, muſt be nettled;
But in Ruſſia, they ſay, he is happily ſettled.

CAREY.

When a generous mind has embrac'd a fine art,
With Fortune's vain gifts it can readily part;
From the world's dirty cares it detaches itſelf,
To contend for a prize far ſuperior to pelf;
And looks with contempt (I am ſure that you feel it)
Upon heart-hard'ning gold, and the villains who ſteal it.

Such

Such a mind, from his childhood, your friend has poſſeſt;
And in Ruſſia, I hear, he is buſy and bleſt;
For a patroneſs there, of imperial ſpirit,
The munificent Catherine, honors his merit.

FACIL.

I proteſt, in the different realms of the earth,
There is no friend, like woman, to genius and worth!

TROPE.

I wiſh you and I may a Catherine find,
In the widow whoſe Knight in our verſe is enſhrin'd!

FACIL.

You perhaps, my dear Carey, can tell us ſome news:
Has her Ladyſhip told you her thoughts of our Muſe?

CAREY.

One thing, my good friends, I can tell you at preſent,
But I fear you'll not think it exceedingly pleaſant;
Yet it's certainly fit you ſhould inſtantly know it,
And, indeed, emulation inſpirits a poet:
Nay, look not ſo grave!—'tis a rival—that's all,
A candidate come at her Ladyſhip's call.

FACIL.

A rival! who is it?

TROPE.

TROPE.

A rival! pray who?

CAREY.

One, I'll venture to ſay, fully known to you two,
A Bard whoſe pretenſions are not very humble.

FACIL.

You ſurely don't mean the pedantical Rumble?

CAREY.

Even ſo! that long-winded loud Stentor of ſong;
And the ladies all think that his language is ſtrong.

TROPE.

'Tis as ſtrong and as knotty as Hercules' club,
And as rough as the roll of the old Cynic's tub.

CAREY.

Huſh! huſh!—in this chamber the Bear is inclos'd,
Growling over the epitaphs you have compos'd.

FACIL.

Is he ſo!—introduce us.——I long to partake
In the courteous remarks that his candor will make.

CAREY.

O, if ſuch is your wiſh, to our gueſt I'll preſent you;
But I fancy his comments will quickly content you.

FACIL.

As for me, I defy him to give me vexation;
And Trope will delight in ſome retaliation.

End of ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Miſs Jaſper *and* Gerrard.

MISS. JASPER.

PRAY watch for my brother, and bring him to me,
And let no one, good Gerrard, my viſitor ſee:
On your faithful prudence I ſolely rely;
We're undone if our gueſts ſhould his perſon eſpy:
From all but ourſelves we muſt keep him unknown;
And, if ſeen, he muſt paſs for a friend of your own.
I depend on your prudence.

GERRARD.

GERRARD.

Dear Miſs, never fear;
To do him any good I would watch for a year:
Heaven knows, I have pray'd for him early and late,
Since the old lawyer robb'd him of this fine eſtate;
And would give all I'm worth could I get him his due.

MISS JASPER.

Honeſt Gerrard! I know we've a good friend in you:
But look out for my brother—he'll want your aſſiſtance.

GERRARD.

I think I ſhall know him at half a mile's diſtance.

MISS JASPER.

He'll be here ere you ſtir—prithee run to the gate.

GERRARD.

Dear Miſs, you forget; I am paſt ſixty-eight;
But I'll make all the haſte that I can, for your ſake,
And I'll pray for you both at each ſtep that I take. [*Exit.*

MISS JASPER.

That's a worthy old creature, though rather too ſlow;
He is truſty, and will not betray us, I know:
But though he's ſecure, I ſtill ſhudder to think
How my hopes in a moment to nothing may ſink.

As the criſis comes on, in a hazardous ſcheme,
With what infinite terrors the fancy will teem!—
In my hopes of the match I was ſanguine and hearty;
But I now have my fears in regard to each party.
Should my Gentleman turn out too ſqueamiſh and coy,
How vain the kind art I have deign'd to employ!
Should my Lady ſhew family-pride, at this ſeaſon,
I've depended in vain upon Nature and Reaſon.
I have ſtudied her well, and I clearly deſcry
She's deſtin'd again to the conjugal tie:
In ſpite of the whims falſe refinement has taught her,
She is honeſt dame Nature's benevolent daughter:
Though a truly good creature, in virtue ſo ſtrong
She would not for the world do a thing ſhe thinks wrong,
Yet of ſuch yielding wax her ſoft boſom is form'd,
It will melt in a moment, if properly warm'd;
Provided her fancy, affectedly nice,
Can delude her kind heart with ſome dainty device,
Some delicate plea for becoming a wife
To the youth, who conjures her to bleſs him for life.
On this I have founded my whimſical plan,
In hopes of producing this fortunate man:

My brother, I know, has a paſſion for her;
And ſhe ſoon to all men would his perſon prefer.
But in my rapid project he will not be ſteady,
Unleſs I perſuade him ſhe loves him already;
For men rarely know, though of knowledge they're vain,
By a well-manag'd minute how much they may gain.
And ſhould he detect the kind art I employ,
Farewell to my hopes of their conjugal joy!—
I yeſterday thought that my plan could not fail;
Now I think 'twill be marvellous ſhould it prevail.——
But away, cruel fears! hence, ye painful alarms!
I behold my dear brother reſtor'd to my arms!

Enter Jaſper.

JASPER.

Heaven bleſs thee, dear girl!—you have got me once more,
In ſpite of my vow not to viſit this ſhore;
And I joyfully fly, with affection's quick pace,
To enfold thy kind heart in a brother's embrace:
With that in my graſp, I true opulence feel,
And my wealth in this caſket no lawyer can ſteal.

MISS JASPER.

If love and eſteem may be reckon'd as treaſure,
You indeed, my dear brother, are rich above meaſure!
O how have I long'd all your feelings to learn!
How ardently pray'd for your ſpeedy return!
How often accus'd your indignant delay!
What a million of things had I ready to ſay!
What queſtions to aſk!—and yet now you are come,
The confuſion of joy has almoſt made me dumb!

JASPER.

My tender, good girl!—I perceive you retain
All your lively ſenſations of pleaſure and pain.—
But theſe tears will relieve you—don't check them, my dear;
'Tis a tribute my heart is inclin'd to revere;
All flattering language I prize them above,
And hold them the trueſt expreſſion of love:
And indeed, when I think what diſtreſs and regret
Have harraſs'd your ſenſible mind ſince we met;
When I think how, from ſordid ſelf-intereſt free,
You forget your own wrongs in attention to me;
I feel tears of gratitude ready to ſtart,
And confeſs my dear ſiſter the pride of my heart!

MISS JASPER.

Yet, for life, you could talk of deſerting this ſiſter!

JASPER.

But you ſee, when ſhe pleaded I could not reſiſt her.—
When I firſt was inform'd of old Vellum's vile fraud,
In my rage I determin'd on living abroad:
For Ruſſia, you know, I departed from Rome;
However, my dear, you may ſafely preſume
Such an abſence from you I could never endure,
Had you not brought me back by a different lure;
And my friends of the Law with your wiſhes conſpir'd,
To make me return with the haſte you deſir'd,
As they give me ſome hopes of ſoon changing our fate,
And regaining from Vellum the pilfer'd eſtate.——
But how fares my dear widow? whoſe partial affection
Seems kindled by ſome friendly angel's direction,
To redreſs half our wrongs, and defeat the old thief,
Who impos'd on Sir Simon's too ſimple belief.
A raſcal! to feign a regard for my fame,
And ſteal my eſtate, not to injure my name.
I thought not my couſin ſo eaſy a fool;
How the deuce could old Vellum ſo make him his tool!

For

For the Knight, on this plea, ſign'd his will when in health,
Not to ſpoil a great artiſt by giving me wealth.—
But where's my kind widow?—I long to expreſs——

MISS JASPER.

You muſt pardon a little demureneſs in dreſs,
Nor expect her, though you to all men ſhe prefers,
To fly into your arms.

JASPER.

No; let me fly to her's.

MISS JASPER.

Not ſo faſt, my dear brother; you ſurely forget
By what vigilant enemies we are beſet!
Should Vellum, whoſe ſpies are now under this roof,
And againſt whoſe vile art no affection is proof,
Should he get the leaſt hint of my Lady's attachment,
He would rage like the wolf in that new-painted hatchment;
Your mutual regard he would ſet at defiance,
And move earth and hell to prevent your alliance.

JASPER.

Would he ſo?—By my faith, as the widow's ſo kind,
I care not what miſchiefs may lurk in his mind;

Not a legion of imps, by a lawyer inſtructed,
Shall mar the ſweet buſineſs her heart has conducted.—
But has ſhe quite hid her connubial deſign?
Has the rogue no ſurmiſe ſhe will ſhortly be mine?

MISS JASPER.

No, not any.

JASPER.

Well manag'd, my dear fairy elf!

MISS JASPER.

To ſay truth, 'tis a ſecret not known to herſelf.

JASPER.

To herſelf!—am I dup'd then?

MISS JASPER.

Dear brother, be cool.

JASPER.

Have you ſent for me home, but to make me a fool?

MISS JASPER.

No indeed! but to make you moſt happy for life,
And give you a lovely and excellent wife;
In ſo ſerious a point could you think that I jeſted?—
Have you purchas'd the licence my letter requeſted?

JASPER.

Here it is—and our folly will finely expoſe,
If the fair one eſcapes whom this chain ſhould incloſe.

MISS JASPER.

Implicitly truſt to my care as your guide,
And ere midnight, perhaps, you may claſp a kind bride.

JASPER.

You teaze me, dear girl! with much whimſical pain;
But I beg that you'll clearly theſe riddles explain.
I fear you have form'd ſome nonſenſical plot:
Has the Widow declar'd ſhe will have me, or not?

MISS JASPER.

Dear brother! indulge me with patient attention,
And our true ſituation I'll honeſtly mention:
But, however my project may ſtrike you at firſt,
Into rage and deſpair do not haſtily burſt;
To be bold in ſuch points is, in truth, to be wiſe,
And a widow's a fort to be won by ſurprize.

JASPER.

So ſhe has not engag'd, then, to give me her hand?

MISS JASPER.

Have patience!—her ſtate you ſhall ſoon underſtand.

That

That ſhe loves you, I know; and with innocent art
I have cheriſh'd the paſſion ſtill hid in her heart:
For ſhe fancies, good creature! that, ſafe from love's
flaſhes,
She's devoted for life to Sir Simon's cold aſhes.—
You know, ſhe affects to be highly refin'd:
And a project I've built on this caſt of her mind,
Which, if you'll obey me, I'll venture my life,
Like a ſtroke of true magic, will make her your wife,
And before any ſoul can ſuſpect our intention.

JASPER.

Well, my girl! and pray what is your magic invention?

MISS JASPER.

You muſt know, ſhe believes that you only return
To oblige her, by gracing Sir Simon's rich urn:
She thinks the Czarina, on this one condition,
That you travel incog. gives you her kind permiſſion;
And her Ladyſhip's mind I have fill'd with theſe notions,
As they form an excuſe for concealing your motions:
So ſhe hopes from your hand, with the higheſt delight,
To behold a fine ſtatue of her noble Knight.

Now, Sir Simon and you have been thought much alike;
And, to make the reſemblance more forcibly ſtrike,
I mean to array you, her heart to entrap,
In this blue ſattin night-gown and red velvet cap;
The dreſs which, to humour his elegant Fair,
The courteous old Cit was contented to wear.

JASPER.

And is this your fine plan! you impertinent jade?
Dreſs me up as the Punch of a dull maſquerade!

MISS JASPER.

Have patience!—my ſcheme muſt ſurprize you, no doubt,
Yet I think you'll applaud, if you hear it throughout;
And if you have ſpirit I know 'twill ſucceed.

JASPER.

To play the dead man—a fine project, indeed!

MISS JASPER.

Nay, but hear me!—your actions I will not controul.

JASPER.

Well, you've made me an idiot; ſo tell me the whole.

MISS JASPER.

No! I've taught you to make yourſelf all you deſire,
If you will but reſtrain this intemperate fire.—

Come,

Come, attend to my plot :—You fond creatures ſhall meet
In the new Mauſoleum, that penſive retreat;
On a pedeſtal there you your perſon muſt place,
To ſhew how a ſtatue the building may grace:
To behold you ſo fixt I'll my Lady prepare:
She'll be ſtruck in ſurveying your figure and air;
She with tender ſurprize will your features review,
And fancy ſhe ſees her Sir Simon in you:
Then ſpring from your pedeſtal, ſeize her ſweet charms,
And ſwear, as you fold her ſoft heart in your arms,
You are like her Sir Simon in ſoul as in form,
That your heart towards her is as tenderly warm;
You may add—in a viſion he bade you direct her
To take you for life as her legal protector,
And, to make her chaſte love to his memory known,
Chuſe his living reſemblance before one of ſtone.——
There's a promiſing ſcheme for a widow's relief!

JASPER.

Set woman to woman, as thief to catch thief!—
I confeſs in your plot there is ſpirit and ſoul;
On her governing foible you've grounded the whole;

And

And rapid ſucceſs might attend on your plan,
But for puppet-ſhew courtſhip I am not the man:
I poſſeſs not the face that your ſtratagem needs,
For ſo bold an attack on a widow in weeds;
And I feel ſome reluctance, in truth, at my heart,
To ſuch an appearance of fraudulent art.

MISS JASPER.

Away, my dear brother, with ſcruples like theſe!
Of the amorous heart doubt's a common diſeaſe,
But one that my counſels may ſpeedily cure:
You both love each other—your meaning is pure—
The gentle Sophia you'll tenderly treat,
Her form is enchanting, her temper is ſweet;
And if your odd courtſhip appears like a jeſt,
In your marriage, I'm ſure, you'll be equally bleſt:
Without it, indeed, our fair friend is undone,
For old Vellum intends that the coxcomb his ſon,
When he comes from his travels——But ſomebody's near;
A ſudden ſurprize in this quarter I fear,
Let us haſte to my room—I muſt ſchool you above:
And you'll act as I wiſh if you've one ſpark of love.

If

If I find you have not—I ſhall honeſtly ſay,
You muſt give up the part that I meant you to play.

[*Exeunt haſtily.*

Enter Lady Sophia *with Papers in her hand, attended by* Carey.

LADY SOPHIA.

Unfold the great doors of the ſable ſaloon.

[*The Scene opens, and diſcovers a large Apartment, with a black velvet Pavilion.*]

At the thoughts of this buſineſs I'm ready to ſwoon!
But you, my good Carey, will leſſen my pain,
And aid my weak nerves the ſad ſcene to ſuſtain;
As my Gentleman-uſher you'll kindly attend,
And bring the three Bards to an audience, my friend:
I ſhall ſit to receive them beneath my pavilion.
To repay their ſweet verſe I could wiſh for a million;
But I think that each Bard will be pleas'd with his lot:
So bring them——Stay, Carey, one thing I've forgot;
But now 'tis too late for my purpoſe, I fear;
I meant to have order'd the horns to be here,

With a little ſoft muſic theſe rites to begin,
And to ſound a dead march as the Poets walk in.

CAREY.

Dear Madam, their verſes will want no ſuch aid;
Let me haſte to preſent them.——Fantaſtical jade!
[*Aſide, as he goes out.*

LADY SOPHIA,

(ſeating herſelf under the Pavilion, and looking over the Papers in her hand).

From theſe epitaphs, thus, I may happily borrow
The parts that moſt flatter my delicate ſorrow;
And while in one piece I harmoniouſly blend
Four lines from each poem theſe authors have penn'd,
I am pleas'd that on them no vexation can fall,
That I ſhall not hurt one, and muſt gratify all.——
But the Geniuſes come.

Enter Carey; *introducing* Rumble, Facil, *and* Trope, *who advance with profound Bows towards the Pavilion.*

LADY SOPHIA.

Ye kind friends to my grief!
Who employ your fine parts in affliction's relief;

My

My mournful diſtreſs by your talents ye calm,
And my dear loſt Sir Simon your verſes embalm.
As I ought, let me firſt Mr. Rumble addreſs:
What I owe to you, Sir, I can never expreſs,
Yet the force of your pen let my gratitude mention.

RUMBLE *(aſide)*.

I perceive ſhe has ſenſe—and I'm ſure of the penſion!

LADY SOPHIA.

In my choice I have done equal juſtice, I hope,
To you, Mr. Facil—and you, Mr. Trope:
From your various productions twelve verſes I chuſe,
And I blend the rich ſweets of each different Muſe;
Thus a wreath is completed to deck the dear ſhrine,
And to honor Sir Simon three Poets combine.
Here you'll ſee how I've manag'd this nice combination.

[*Diſtributing a Paper to each.*

RUMBLE.

I proteſt I can't ſuffer this conglomeration
Of marble and brick! this anomalous jumble!

CAREY *(in a whiſper to* Rumble).

Remember the penſion, my good Mr. Rumble!

RUMBLE.

Sir! my admurmurations ſhall loudly be heard!
I've a right to exclaim that my Lady's abſurd:
In her cap ſhe as well might conquaſſate together
The down of green geeſe and an oſtrich's feather.

FACIL.

I think, Mr. Rumble, my Lady diſplays
The moſt dexterous art in uniting our lays:
Your elder Muſe firſt, like the waggon of Night,
Moves ſolemn and grand;—like the chariot of Light,
Airy Trope then advances, with different pace;—
And, like Twilight, between you I find my right place.

RUMBLE.

Remember, young man! while his ſplendor you brag on,
That rich Ponderoſity rides in a waggon.—
But I will not deſcend to a vile conteſtation;
Our minds were not faſhion'd for reciprocation.
My Lady I pardon, on this one condition,
That ſhe quickly proceeds to a decompoſition:
She may chuſe of our epitaphs which ſhe thinks fit;
But a mixture ſo monſtrous I will not admit.

She

She as well with her ſciſſars might haſtily ſnip
From different portraits the eye, noſe, and lip,
And think that her needle accompliſh'd great matters,
By compacting a face of the diſcrepant tatters.

LADY SOPHIA.

O mercy!—dear Sir, pray this buſineſs adjuſt,
And do not diſturb my Sir Simon's calm duſt!
If a ſquabble concerning his tomb you excite,
I am ſure his dear ſpirit will haunt us to-night:
I feel in this terror new anguiſh ariſe,
And a freſh flood of ſorrow ſwells into my eyes!

CAREY (*aſide to* Rumble).

Mr. Rumble! I fear, if you do not ſubmit,
My Lady will have an hyſterical fit.

RUMBLE.

Sir! in points that my credit and honor involve,
A few drops of ſalt-water won't melt my reſolve.

FACIL (*aſide to* Carey.)

I proteſt, though fantaſtic I own ſhe appears,
I can not bear the ſight of ſuch beauty in tears;
And as I perceive ſhe is really diſtreſt,
I'll at once put an end to the ſtrife in her breaſt.

[*To* Lady Sophia.]

Dear Madam! that you on this point may not grieve,
And your delicate mind from all doubt to relieve,
Let me and my friend our pretenſions reſign,
And leave one ſingle Bard to embelliſh the ſhrine;
We beg that alone Mr. Rumble may bear
The honor he thinks that we ought not to ſhare.

CAREY.

No, no, my good friend; you're too modeſt, indeed!
I've a plan for ye all, that I truſt will ſucceed.

LADY SOPHIA.

What is it, good Carey? I wiſh to purſue
Some happy expedient ſuggeſted by you.

CAREY.

At Mecca, dear Ma'am, ſeven poems, we're told,
O'er the Prophet's rich tomb were ſuſpended in gold;
Now, let three worthy Bards each an elegy write,
And ſuſpend all their works o'er the tomb of your Knight.

LADY SOPHIA.

O charming!—your thought is enchantingly fine!—
Mr. Rumble! I hope you applaud his deſign?

RUMBLE.

RUMBLE.

From this propoſition I will not revolt,
Though my young rivals' pride it may ſerve to exalt;
Of the honor you do them I will not be jealous;
But I'll teach the vain youths to revere an Entellus.

LADY SOPHIA.

Well, I hope what has paſt will be kindly forgot,
And that now you'll all deign to compoſe on the ſpot.—
I commend, my good Carey, the Bards to your care,
Entertain them, I beg, with the choiceſt of fare:
And, as it grows late, you muſt leave me, my friend,
In affliction's chaſte rites my lone evening to ſpend.—
Farewell, worthy Sirs;—you now leave me to ſorrow,
But I hope to attend you at dinner to-morrow.

CAREY.

Come, my friends! now permit me to be your director.—
Mr. Rumble, 'Rack Punch is your genuine nectar;
As the night's coming on, I'll prepare a rich bowl,
That ſhall give to you Poets freſh vigour of ſoul;
For the Muſe with new force, like the flying-fiſh, ſprings,
When ſhe ſtoops for the purpoſe of wetting her wings.

[*Exit* Carey, *with* Rumble, Facil, *and* Trope.

LADY SOPHIA *alone.*

I am glad we have ſooth'd Mr. Rumble's chagrin!

Enter Miſs Jaſper.

LADY SOPHIA.

O, my dear, with the Poets I've had ſuch a ſcene!
They have ſhaken my nerves to that cruel degree,
I ſhall quiver all night like a poor aſpen-tree.

MISS JASPER.

My tidings new life in your heart will infuſe;
The young Sculptor's arriv'd!

LADY SOPHIA.

That, indeed, is ſweet news!
Then in effigy ſoon I ſhall claſp my dear Knight!
Is the block too provided, and perfectly white?
Of the true Parian marble, I truſt, he will mold
The ſtatue my boſom ſo pants to behold.

MISS JASPER.

I aſſure you, the buſineſs engages his heart,
And you'll ſee a fine work from his exquiſite art.
To my brother already the vault I have ſhewn;
And of attitudes there he is thinking alone.

As I mean to conceal his arrival at home,
We went by the paſs under ground to the dome.

LADY SOPHIA.

We will join him, dear Fanny, and go the ſame way.
I long at the tomb my devotions to pay;
To hear how your brother's fine fancy and ſkill
With new decorations the ſtructure may fill,
And to ſee in what poſture the ſtatue may ſtand.

MISS JASPER.

Let us go—he'll be happy to kiſs your fair hand.

[*Exeunt.*

[*The Scene changes to the inſide of a grand Mauſoleum; on one ſide, a large oblong Tomb of white marble, on the other, ſome ſteps aſcending from a ſubterraneous paſſage.* Jaſper *appears in the Gown and Cap of* Sir Simon.]

JASPER.

What a part has my ſiſter induc'd me to play!
I wiſh from the ſcene I could well ſlip away.
I ſhall never ſucceed—ſurely love was ne'er made,
Since the days of old Jove, in ſuch odd maſquerade!

I ſcarce know myſelf, in this whimſical plight,
But I fancy I look very like the old Knight:
Yet if you, my ſweet Widow, incline to my plan,
This image will beat the original man.—
Gad! I hope ſhe won't fancy I'm really his ghoſt!—
But I hear them below—I muſt leap to my poſt.

[Jaſper *places himſelf in a ſtriking attitude on the top of the marble Tomb, while* Lady Sophia *and* Miſs Jaſper *aſcend the ſteps from the ſubterranean paſſage.*]

LADY SOPHIA *(ſtarting).*

O mercy!—what phantom amazes my ſight!
Has the grave to my love given back the dear Knight?—
'Tis himſelf I perceive—'tis no fanciful dream!
O, I faint—— [*Falls on the arm of* Miſs Jaſper.

[Jaſper *flies to* Lady Sophia *in great agitation, and ſpeaks at the ſame time to* Miſs Jaſper.]

See the end of your pitiful ſcheme!—
As I live, her fond fears have ſuſpended her breath!
And I've frighten'd the delicate creature to death!

MISS JASPER.

Never fear, ſimple Charles! you will not loſe your wife:—
You underſtand marble much better than life!

LADY SOPHIA *(reviving).*

Where am I!——O, pray Sir, are you Mr. Jaſper?

MISS JASPER *(whiſpering her brother).*

In your arms, you poor ſimpleton! haſten to claſp her!—
If you ſtand ſo confounded, how can you ſucceed?
I ſhall preſently think you a ſtatue indeed!

JASPER *(to* Lady Sophia).

How fare you, dear Lady?—'tis true that you ſee
Your devoted affectionate Jaſper in me:
Of your beauty my heart has long felt the effect,
In chaſte admiration and tender reſpect:
No licentious deſign with my paſſion could mingle;
But the very firſt moment I heard you were ſingle,
All my foreign purſuits I reſolv'd to diſclaim;
For your ſmiles are to me more attractive than fame.
Though the wintry ocean was roaring between us,
My love, with fond hope in the favor of Venus,
Bade me croſs the rough deep, and, diſdaining controul,
Fly with ſpeed to the diſtant delight of my ſoul!

LADY SOPHIA.

How like my Sir Simon in perſon and air!
The mild turn of his lip, and his eye to a hair!

JASPER.

O think not the likeneſs lies only in feature!
I've his ſoul, heart, and paſſions, my ſweet, lovely crea-
ture!
In me, then, O fancy you ſee him reſtor'd!
And with fondneſs connubial be lov'd and ador'd!
Inſtead of a ſenſeleſs, cold image of ſtone,
Make his living reſemblance for ever your own!
A ſoft ſtatue of wax in your hand I will prove,
You ſhall mold me to all the chaſte fancies of love.

LADY SOPHIA.

I proteſt your idea is ſweetly refin'd,
To delight the pure warmth of a delicate mind!
I could wiſh ſuch a likeneſs to keep in my view,
And for ever contemplate Sir Simon in you:
But, though the mere offspring of tender ſenſation,
Such a wiſh would be reckon'd a groſs inclination;
And I'm ſure I ſhould die at that horrid ſuggeſtion!

JASPER *(embracing her)*.

Dear angel! no tongue ſhall thy purity queſtion.

LADY SOPHIA.

O Charles! to my boſom you give ſuch a flutter,
All my reaſons againſt you I want breath to utter.

JASPER.

JASPER.

By the eloquent glance of that dear melting eye,
With my delicate purpoſe I know you'll comply.

MISS JASPER.

Huſh! huſh! I have heard ſome one ſtep near the door;
Pray be ſtill, till the coaſt I can clearly explore.

LADY SOPHIA.

O my ſtars! ſhould my people diſcover at home,
That by night I converſe with a man in this dome——

MISS JASPER.

Haſte! away! under ground you muſt quickly retreat.

JASPER *(taking up* Lady Sophia *in his arms)*.

Come, eſcape in my arms!

LADY SOPHIA.

Don't you feel my heart beat?

JASPER.

So does mine, lovely creature! my ſoul is on fire.

LADY SOPHIA.

But I never can yield to your ſenſual deſire.

[*Exit* Jaſper, *bearing off* Lady Sophia *down the ſubterranean ſtaircaſe.*]

CAREY,

(ſpeaking without the great door of the Mauſoleum.)

Miſs Jaſper! Miſs Jaſper! pray, are you within?

MISS JASPER *(opening the door).*

Is it you, Sir, who make ſo uncivil a din?—
Pray what is the cauſe of this ſudden intruſion?
Have your Poets produc'd a new ſcene of confuſion?

CAREY.

Gerrard ſays you have lock'd up the key of the 'Rack,
So to give the Bards punch be ſo kind to come back.
Come, my dear.—

MISS JASPER.

The deuce take your poetical potion!
You have ſpoil'd my poor Lady's nocturnal devotion.—
How forgetful old Gerrard is ſuddenly grown!
He has, ſurely, the key in ſome draw'r of his own.
But you jeſt.—Get you gone!—I muſt haſten to her.

CAREY.

But without a few kiſſes indeed I ſhan't ſtir.

MISS JASPER.

Piſh!—nonſenſe!—make haſte then—I've no time to ſpare.

CAREY.

Can't you give me ſome minutes, my dear buſy Fair?

MISS JASPER.

No, in truth, not a moment; my hurry is great—
Meet me here in the morning preciſely at eight,
And perhaps I may make you ſome pleaſing amends.
Good-night!

CAREY.

Let us part; though, like lovers and friends;
I deſerve this ſweet kiſs for my patience.

MISS JASPER.

Good-night!
To-morrow, I hope, will bring wonders to light!

[*Exeunt different ways.*

End of ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I. *The Mauſoleum.*

Enter Trope *with* Facil, *laughing.*

FACIL.

IN my life I ne'er knew an adventure ſo drole!

TROPE.

But what is it, dear Facil, pray tell me the whole?

FACIL.

So I will, when a little calm breath I can draw,
In ceaſing to laugh at the figure I ſaw.

TROPE.

What figure?

FACIL.

Why, Rumble: I now ſee him ſtand
With his garments half-button'd, a ſcroll in his hand;
And the poor frighted girl!——

TROPE.

What the deuce do you mean?
In an odd wanton frolic has Rumble been ſeen——

To an Abigail's room did the old Bard repair?

FACIL.

No, no, I'll relate to you all the affair.—
You muſt know that our punch had ſo heated my brain,
That to ſleep half the night I endeavour'd in vain;
But was juſt in a ſlumber, between three and four,
When a half-array'd figure threw open my door:
'Twas a poor trembling damſel, who haſtily ſaid,
"Riſe! riſe! or you'll ſurely be burnt in your bed!"
And I heard Rumble's voice thrice repeat the word
"Fire!"
But as that dreadful word was ſoon follow'd by "Lyre,"
I perceiv'd the good girl, I now held by the arm,
Had miſtaken his verſe for a cry of alarm.

TROPE.

Very good!—he has often theſe ſtarts in the night.
But how did you calm the poor girl in her fright?

FACIL.

The wild little wench, like a poor frighted hare,
Knew not which way to run, and did nothing but ſtare;
When, holding the door of my chamber a-jar,
We perceiv'd, by the aid of the bright morning-ſtar,

The

The old Bard, who of liquor had taken his fill,
Sally forth from his quarters in odd diſhabille;
With punch and with poetry heated, he ſwaggers,
And reels down the ſtairs, like a horſe in the ſtaggers,
Repeating with emphaſis, ſeveral times,
The unfortunate word in his dangerous rhymes;
And the girl, who now ſaw her miſtake very clear,
Laugh'd, in ſpite of her ſhame, at the ſource of her fear.

TROPE.

And you, I ſuppoſe, when her terror was fled,
Taught her bloom to revive by the warmth of your bed?

FACIL.

No, indeed; had her panic been only affected,
I perhaps had been fooliſh, as you have ſuſpected;
But her fear and her modeſty both were ſo true
That they won my regard, and ſhe ſafely withdrew.

TROPE.

But where's our friend Rumble?

FACIL.

O, nobody knows.

TROPE.

To ſome ſhady retreat he is gone to compoſe.

FACIL.

FACIL.

On the houſe-top, perhaps, like a bird he may ſit;
He conſiders keen air as a friend to his wit.
It would not ſurprize me this phœnix to ſee
Oddly perch'd on a bough of an old lofty tree;
For he thinks he writes beſt when he's neareſt to heaven:
But he'll ſoon want his breakfaſt—'tis much after ſeven.

TROPE.

Hark! what is that noiſe, like the woodman's loud ſtroke?

FACIL.

As I live, it is Rumble in yon ſhatter'd oak!
Don't you ſee where he's ſitting aſtride on the branch?
He has crack'd that large limb by the weight of his paunch.

TROPE.

I believe he's aſleep!—ſhall we give him a call,
Leſt he chance in his ſlumber to get a bad fall?

FACIL.

Never fear:—here is one to take care of his life,
Here's the nurſe of our Brobdignag baby, his wife.

Enter Mrs. Rumble, *haſtily.*

MRS. RUMBLE.

Pray, Gentlemen, where is my dear Mr. Rumble?—
I have news for you Poets, to make you all grumble!—
But where is my huſband?—I ſeek him in haſte.

FACIL.

Dear Ma'am! we're ſurpriz'd that, with ſingular taſte,
From the ſoft arms of Beauty he ſtrangely has fled,
To embrace the rough limbs of an oak in their ſtead!—
On that bough you may ſee him.

MRS. RUMBLE.

Ah! barbarous man!
He will venture his life, let me ſay what I can.
I am ſure ſome miſchance will his genius o'erwhelm,
T'other day he fell down from the top of an elm.—
Mr. Rumble! take care!—Mr. Rumble, my dear!

FACIL.

In this caſe, my dear Madam, you've nothing to fear.
Behold! 'tis an incident only for mirth,
For the bough gently falling conſigns him to earth.

MRS. RUMBLE.

I rejoice he is landed!

Enter Rumble, *ſtretching himſelf and yawning.*

MRS. RUMBLE.

My dear Mr. Rumble!
It is well you have met with ſo eaſy a tumble:
I wiſh that your fancy was not ſo romantic;
All the people will think you are perfectly frantic.

RUMBLE.

Peace, woman!—I care not for idle deriſion,
I have had a ſuperb elegiacal viſion:
Homer ſays, with great truth, "Onar ek dios eſti."

MRS. RUMBLE.

On firſt waking, my dear, you are apt to be teſty;
But I'm glad if the Muſe has been kind to your ſlumbers,
And I hope we ſhall hear your mellifluous numbers.

RUMBLE.

In my dream I've compos'd, and with clear continuity,
Such emollient verſe for the grief of viduity,
'Twould have ſooth'd the ſad relict of old king Mauſolus!

MRS. RUMBLE.

In our paſſions the Nine may have charms to control us;
But your Muſe, I'm afraid, might as well have miſcarried,
For the lady you praiſe as a widow is married!

RUMBLE.

Peace, woman! you're crazy!

FACIL.

How! married, dear Madam!

MRS. RUMBLE.

Ay, married! as ſure as we're children of Adam.
You know, Sir, rich folks, with a licence, have power
To marry without the canonical hour;
And, leaving her gueſts o'er their punch to carouſe,
My Lady at midnight receiv'd a new ſpouſe.

RUMBLE.

Mrs. Rumble, I fear 'tis our punch that has bred
Theſe nuptial phantaſma's in your giddy head:
Your ſtory has nothing of concatenation.

MRS. RUMBLE.

Mr. Rumble, you aways will doubt my narration!
But I deal not in fiction, although a Bard's wife;
On the truth of this ſecret I'd venture my life:
From one of the houſe-maids I happen'd to worm it,
And here comes a gentleman who will confirm it.

Enter

Enter Carey.

MRS. RUMBLE.

Your voice, Mr. Carey, will prove I am right;
Pray was not her Ladyſhip married laſt night?

CAREY.

Dear Madam! your queſtion can hardly be ſerious.

MRS. RUMBLE.

I am ſure ſhe was wed, though the wedding's myſterious.

CAREY.

Do you really believe it?—dear Madam, to whom?
It muſt be to one of theſe Bards, or a groom:
For, excepting ourſelves and the men of her train,
Not a male did this manſion laſt night entertain:
But whence your conjecture? on what is it grounded?

RUMBLE.

Silly woman! I tell you your brain is confounded;
But I think we may gueſs, from your dream of this fact,
How in widowhood you will be tempted to act;
I ſuppoſe, when I've finiſh'd my ſcene of mortality,
However you ſorrow in ſhew and verbality,
You ſoon will renounce all your dignified gravity;
And, entic'd by ſome bellman's poetical ſuavity,

Go

Go to church with a fellow who deigns to rehearſe
A quatrain on your charms in his annual verſe.

MRS. RUMBLE.

O you barbarous man! by ſo cruel a jeſt
Would you wound the chaſte love of ſo tender a breaſt?
You know me too well to believe what you ſay.—
Thank my ſtars! here's an evidence coming this way;
And you'll ſee truth and juſtice are both on my ſide.

Enter Miſs Jaſper.

MRS. RUMBLE *(haſtily)*.

Miſs Jaſper! pray is not my Lady a Bride?

MISS JASPER.

You are right, my dear Madam.

CAREY.

It cannot be real!

MISS JASPER.

From you Bards I requeſt a ſublime hymeneal.

TROPE.

So ſuddenly married!

FACIL.

FACIL.

You certainly joke.

MISS JASPER.

A word of more truth in my life I ne'er ſpoke.

CAREY.

What d'ye mean, my dear Fanny? pray do not deceive us.

MRS. RUMBLE.

What infidels, Madam! they will not believe us.

FACIL.

Pray, to what happy man may ſo fair a prize fall?

MISS JASPER.

The Bridegroom I'll ſoon introduce to you all;
And you Poets, I truſt, will a new ſtring employ,
With ſingular pleaſure to echo his joy.

RUMBLE.

So my fine elegiacs are now out of ſeaſon;—
I was mad, to think woman a creature of reaſon,
And on widowhood's ſlippery virtues to raiſe
The luminous fabric of rythmical praiſe!
But I'll haſte to be gone from this ſcene of fatuity:
Come along, Mrs. Rumble; I've done with viduity.—

My

My Lady may welcome more juvenile comers,
I have no time to waſte upon conjugal mummers.

MISS JASPER.

Mr. Rumble! pray ſtay, in our joy to partake.

MRS. RUMBLE.

Stay, my dear Mr. Rumble! you'll ſtay for my ſake.
Though the grand and the gloomy is all your delight,
I confeſs that feſtivity pleaſes my ſight;
Pray indulge me for once!—it would half break my heart
Without ſeeing the Bridegroom were we to depart.

RUMBLE.

Curioſity ruin'd your grandmother Eve;
And to gratify yours you ſhall not have my leave:
From a farcical ſcene it is time we ſhould go,
And who plays the Jack Pudding I want not to know.

MRS. RUMBLE.

My Lady may ſtill wiſh your verſe to peruſe!

RUMBLE.

For Politics henceforth I give up the Muſe;
Though political paths may have ſome tortuoſity,
To enter on them I have leſs ſcrupuloſity,

Than

Than to feed your vain ſex with poetical flummery,
And at laſt be the dupe of their amorous mummery.
But I'll have my revenge, and, before my ſpleen cools,
I will prove all the ſex-flattering poets are fools.—
Come away, Mrs. Rumble!—your duty's ſubmiſſion.

[*Exit, bearing off* Mrs. Rumble.

MISS JASPER.

Poor woman! I pity her diſmal condition,
And am griev'd that ſo roughly he makes her return:—
But here's one to conſole us for every concern.

Enter Jaſper.

MISS JASPER.

To you, my good friends, I the Bridegroom preſent,
And you all will rejoice in this happy event.

CAREY.

Dear Jaſper! o'erwhelm'd by this joyous ſurprize,
I am almoſt afraid to believe my own eyes!
Are you really return'd? and, in truth, are you married?
Has this excellent plan been ſo ſuddenly carried?
Or, with potent illuſion and artful pretences,
Has this fair little ſorcereſs cheated our ſenſes?

JASPER.

You may truſt in her magic, as honeſt and true;
She has render'd me happy, and ſo ſhe will you:
To you, my dear Carey, I give her for life;
So enchanting a ſiſter muſt prove a ſweet wife;
And, with pleaſure I add, you'll receive your fair Bride
With the fortune ſhe merits completely ſupplied.

CAREY.

Her heart in itſelf is an opulent dower!

JASPER *(to* Facil *and* Trope.)

My worthy old friends! in this fortunate hour
It increaſes my joy to meet you on this ſpot.

FACIL.

I rejoice in your bliſs!

TROPE.

I am charm'd with your lot!

JASPER.

And with double delight the good fortune I view,
Which may prove I retain a warm friendſhip for you:
I've a ſcheme for ye both, my dear Facil and Trope,
That will meet with your hearty concurrence, I hope.

You muſt yield to my wiſh—I will not be denied
From any vain ſcruples of generous pride.

FACIL.

With hearts ſo enliven'd by ſeeing you bleſt,
We ſhall hardly refuſe whatſoe'er you requeſt.

JASPER.

Though a few dainty whims, of a ſingular kind,
Have o'erclouded the worth of her excellent mind,
The ſoul of my Lady Sophia is fraught
With the true mental treaſures of generous thought.
She perceives, and diſclaims for the reſt of her days,
The foibles to which falſe refinement betrays:
She now thinks this proud fabric of ill-applied art
The ridiculous whim of too feeling a heart.
Sir Simon had many calm virtues, whoſe claim
From ungrateful Oblivion ſhall reſcue his name:
But all the diſtinctions of rank are confus'd,
Fame herſelf is inſulted, and Art is abus'd,
When the plume and the laurel inſultingly wave
O'er the honeſt plain Merchant's prepoſterous grave:
Convinc'd of this truth, 'tis my Lady's deſign
To alter this dome on a new plan of mine.

Here with Freedom and Eaſe you, my friends, may reſide;
Good apartments for each I ſhall quickly provide:
For this dome, where the Founder ſhall riſe in a nich,
Is to prove an aſylum for artiſts not rich.

CAREY.

I am charm'd with your project, dear Jaſper!

JASPER.

Yet hear:—
By the will there's a fund of four hundred a year
Of real hard caſh, from incumbrances free,
Which my Lady herſelf is to guide as truſtee,
To ſupport any ſtructure ſhe chuſes to plan,
To perpetuate the name of her worthy good man;
This between you, dear Bards, ſhe is pleas'd to adjuſt:
And when opulent Honeſty ſinks in the duſt,
May his heirs ever uſe what he leaves upon earth
In ſecuring calm comfort to Genius and Worth!

FACIL.

We always have ſaid, and your actions evince,
You, Jaſper, were born with the ſoul of a prince;
But our gratitude how ſhall we utter to you?

JASPER.

By returning your thanks where they chiefly are due.

My

My Lady's pure bounty, that ſcorns to be ſtinted,
Surpaſt in your favour whatever I hinted.—
To prove that I wed not from motives of pelf,
I have ſettled her wealth on her generous ſelf;
She is rich, and intends to make uſe of her treaſure
In the purchaſe of noble and permanent pleaſure:
At the higheſt of intereſt our gold we employ,
When it brings a return of benevolent joy.—
Thank my ſtars! all my wiſhes are crown'd with ſucceſs;
Kind Fortune, I juſt now have learn'd by expreſs,
Outruns, in our favor, the ſlow ſtep of Law:
Old Vellum, alarm'd by our hints of a flaw
In the baſe legal work that Fraud led him to frame,
The reverſion he ſtole has propos'd to diſclaim,
Upon terms which I now, for tranquillity's ſake,
At my Lady's requeſt, ſhall be willing to take.—
But come, my good friends, let us haſte to the hall,
Where the Bride will be happy to welcome you all.

CAREY.

Well, my friend! I confeſs, in the courſe of my life,
I have oft been provok'd with your new lovely wife;

But for this her laſt act, her late whims I forgive,
And ſhall bleſs the kind creature as long as I live.—
You will teach, as you mold her to life's ſweeteſt duty,
All her virtues to ſhine as complete as her beauty:
And may each childleſs widow, in youth's lively ſtate,
Who has yielded an honeſt old huſband to fate,
In a partner like you find the ſureſt relief,
And to ſenſible joy turn fantaſtical grief!

FINIS.